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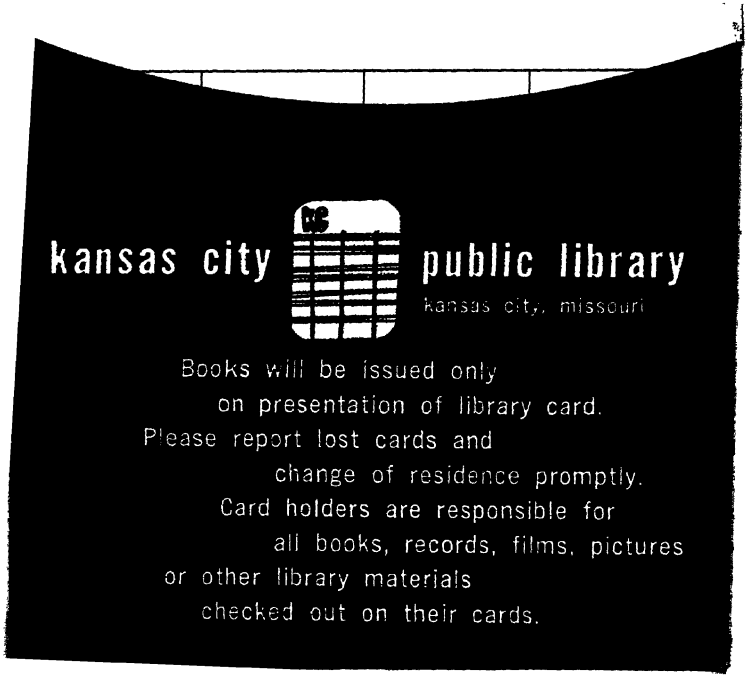
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MR. GANDHI

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The Indian Way
The Amazing English
Indian Pilgrimage

MR. GANDHI

RANJEE SHAHANI

New York
The Macmillan Company
1961

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Especially for
Leticia V. Ramos

FOREWORD

IT WILL be a long time before history pronounces its final word on Gandhi and the consequences of his career, and perhaps we might add that it will be a long time before the significance of Gandhi for the meaning of the historical process is fully comprehended. Mr. Shahani's book is a valuable contribution to this understanding. He writes as a profound admirer of his hero, and from within the tradition of Indian philosophy and religion, but he has also the mind of one who is well acquainted with Western culture; and, while never abandoning his loyalty to the cause for which Gandhi stood, Mr. Shahani is able to regard his hero objectively and with an affection that does not exclude criticism. Writing as one who claims no firsthand knowledge of the Indian scene, I can say that the author's descriptions of the conditions of the people and his portraits of persons who played important parts in the events of Gandhi's life have enabled at least one ignorant reader to gain some enlightenment on the background of the story. Mr. Shahani has hard things to say about some of the actors in the drama. I express no opinion on the justice of his censures, but I cannot help remarking that Gandhi himself would probably have written more charitably. But of course the main

interest of the book is its description and analysis of the central figure.

The past half-century has produced only too many examples of the leader-dictator type, and, from one point of view, Gandhi is one of them. As Mr. Shahani shows, Gandhi attained political power by enlisting the support of the Indian masses, and at the end of his life, though possessing no ostensible power, he could make and break governments and ministers. But he was evidently a leader of a different type from those of the Western world. The really important fact about his achievement is that it was based on "soul force" instead of violence, and on love instead of resentment and hate. No one who reads this book will doubt that Gandhi was perfectly sincere in his pacifism and his belief in the power of love. This is worth pondering upon, because it suggests a possible method of producing political and social changes that would leave no lasting bitterness. We should, however, beware of drawing conclusions from Gandhi's success that go beyond the evidence. It is certain that Gandhi's policy of nonresistance brought about the situation that made the independence of India inevitable. Without him, no doubt, that independence would have been achieved, but not so soon and not in the peaceful way in which, happily, the British Raj came to an end. But, as Mr. Shahani recognizes, the success of this policy depended, to a great degree, on the nature of the opposition. The British people also have a conscience, and there are limits to the things they will do, or approve, even for the purpose of defending their Empire. It does not follow that the policy would be equally effective against a ruthless overlord who had no scruples about any means to attain the end. Would Stalin, for example, have quailed before Gandhi's movement, and would "soul force" and nonviolence have prevailed against the full technique of forcible repression,

mass deportation, propaganda, and brainwashing? We do not know the answer to that question. If we did we should be able to estimate the probable future of mankind more confidently than in fact we can. It is at least worthy of note that Gandhi not only appealed to the consciences and spirits of his own people, but also awakened responses from beliefs and ideals deeply seated in the British people.

The story of Gandhi includes two tragedies that have a lasting significance. The first particularly concerns the British nation and Commonwealth. How did it occur that one who was, at the outset of his public life, an enthusiastic supporter of the British rule in India ended by becoming the leader of those who demanded its end? The process of disappointment and disillusion that produced this change in the mind of Gandhi deserves careful study because it might help to avoid errors elsewhere. The other tragedy is more profound and more personal to the life of Gandhi. In the end, the Gandhi method suffered a shattering defeat. The terrible massacres and mass misery that followed on the ending of the British rule seem to present us with the paradox that nonviolence and "soul force" could unite India in revolt against an alien power, but could not soften the internal antagonisms of races, languages, and religions. The crowning tragedy, as well as paradox, is that Gandhi met his death not at the hands of those against whom he fought, but from one of those for whom he had devoted his life.

On any view of the rightness or wrongness of the political results of Gandhi's career, he was an important historical figure and a person of remarkable spiritual power, and I am grateful to the author of this work for giving us a vivid and balanced portrait of a great man in a book that is alive from the first page to the last.

W. R. MATTHEWS
Dean of St. Paul's, London

June, 1960

PREFACE

No INDIAN of recent times is so well known to the outside world as Gandhi. But opinions about him are various and varying. According to some, he was an Oriental *éminence grise;* others see him as a Mahatma, a Great Soul, one who had glimpses into the glory of heaven. Not a few affirm that he was hardly more than a mediocre little man who, by sheer will power, removed the obstacles in his path one by one until he succeeded in becoming the uncrowned King of India.

What is the truth?

Gandhi was at once the liberator of India and a block in her road to political freedom. His were the inspiration and the drive that welded his countrymen together, that opposed the formidable British Raj with an irresistible force, a force all the more remarkable in that it eschewed violence and drew on spiritual sources alone. But it was also Gandhi who refused the compromise the British were prepared to accept prior to Independence Day and who therefore probably made the birthpangs more painful than they might have been. He was revered by millions as a saint, but at the same time he left an indelible mark on the secular history

of the world. Dead now more than thirteen years, his influence continues to grow, especially abroad.

The life and political career of this intrepid spirit have been chronicled by many, and the end is not yet. But in this work I shall concern myself with Gandhi's being and becoming, not with his jousts with destiny. I have tried to seek the man behind the legend. Many of the intimate details about this life I received directly from his favorite son, Devadas, who for many years was a great friend of mine. I have spoken to many relatives and co-workers of Gandhi. Among these I would single out Mr. Chaganlal; Mr. Mushruwalla (onetime editor of the *Harijan*); Mr. G. B. Pant, the present Deputy Prime Minister of India; Mr. Morarji Desai, Finance Minister; Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, sometime Law Minister and the moving spirit among the so-called Untouchables; Mr. and Mrs. K. M. Munshi; Dr. S. S. Bhatnagar, who proved to be not only a fine scientist but also a first-class organizer; and Bharati Sarabhai, the poet.

My English friends have also been a great help to me. Miss Agatha Harrison, who was a true friend of India all her life, collected every scrap of information she could find on Gandhi, and out of the goodness of her heart made her documents available to me. The late Countess Mountbatten talked with me about her revered Indian friend. Sir Stafford Cripps was equally kind, and so were Lord Halifax and Mr. L. S. Amery. Mr. and Mrs. H. N. Brailsford, who often visited Gandhi and have been his guests at one of his ashrams, contributed such insights as they possessed. Mr. Edward Thompson, to my mind the English novelist who best understood my country, gave me revealing sidelights.

For ten years or more I have been collating what the French call *les petits faits vrais* about Gandhi. No books or diaries contain them. They had to be dug out—in count-

less trips and interviews. Sometimes I have journeyed a thousand miles or more to get a few facts. On occasion I have sat far into the night, listening to idle chatter, hoping that some significant detail would at last be revealed. And when it came I would forget my weariness.

Now my task is over. What manner of man was Gandhi? How did he become what he was? What inner stresses and agonies forged his character and fired his spirit? Whence the thought that determined his course of conduct, a conduct that he was to impose on his people as well as on the European masters of his country? What did this man stand for in regard to the human experiment on this passionate planet of ours? I have tried to answer these questions without any prejudice.

The inquiry has been its own reward. For Gandhi is not dead. He has become a part of the spiritual atmosphere of our age.

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MR. GANDHI

I

THE BEGINNINGS

GANDHI could only have been a Hindu. His qualities and defects were peculiar to his race. In India alone could he have been born.

He was not a genius. He was something quite different: an inspired being, a vehicle for a larger voice than his own. The soul of the wide world dreaming on things to come whispered to him its dread and dreaded secrets.

It may be said of him, more justly than of any other Indian, past or present, that he represented the will and wish of the anonymous multitudes of his vast homeland. In him there moved a double rhythm: he swayed to the Song Celestial, as played by Lord Krishna, the Hindu incarnation of God, and he harkened to the *Ah*-ness of his countrymen. No schism here. The two motions of the spirit dwelt side by side, one enriching the other. To mingle heaven with earth was the goal of Gandhi.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born at Porbandar, Kathiawar, a part of the then Bombay Presidency, on October 2, 1869. Homes like his could be found in any numbers in that part of India. He was the youngest son of Karamchand,

alias Kaba Gandhi, by his fourth wife, Putlibai, who bore in all three sons and one daughter.

I learned from Gandhi's surviving relatives that his mother had been a remarkable woman. Not educated in the modern sense of the word, nor indeed worldly-wise, she was simple and good. As she nursed her infant son she sang to him of the heroes of the great Hindu epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata,* so that one might say he absorbed the rhythm of India's musical meditations with his mother's milk. One of the first words the child learned to pronounce was that of *Ram,* who occupies a special place in the hearts of Hindus, beloved by high and low alike. Years later, at the end of his life, when the assassin's bullets had pierced his body, Gandhi with his last breath murmured to the Deity who was ever present within him: "Ram! Ram!"

Mohan was an ordinary child, slow in his movements, halting in speech, almost afraid of his own shadow. From his earliest days he was inward-looking. What he saw there puzzled him—as a good deal of what goes on in the external world puzzled him—and he turned his puzzlement over and over again in his mind. But he went to no one else for answers. He liked resolving things for himself.

He remained a bewildered little boy for a long while. The odd mixture of bliss and bane called life charmed and repelled him at once. He experimented with himself and others in a fumbling way, knowing even at this early age that knowledge is at best only another form of ignorance. He was just a passable student: books did not thrill him.

His comrades at school, knowing that the young Gandhi did not enjoy games, left him pretty much to himself. His teachers, finding him docile and well mannered, were kind to him, but they found no particular reason to single him out for special attention. And so the boy developed a sad little routine: he would go to school, see his lessons through most

conscientiously, stand in a corner by himself when the time came for sports, and then return home, creeping along the road like a snail, feeling sorry for himself. Why was he not like other boys? What had made him so shy and so timid? Like so many other adolescents he felt himself packed with powers he sensed only dimly; he brooded for hours at a stretch over the whys and wherefores of things. No answers came to him in childhood. Perhaps none came during his lifetime. But when Gandhi searched for answers he delved in strange quarries of thought that began to color and deepen his developing personality.

The household in which Mohan grew up, that of his father, Karamchand Gandhi, was one of rigid observance of the Hindu pieties. The elder Gandhi himself was an upright, loyal man, full of human kindness. To him the betrayal of friend or foe was the most heinous of crimes. He worshiped truth. He spoke little, but when he spoke it was always to the point. He abhorred rhetoric; he presented facts exactly as he found them. Charming fripperies, verbal or spiritual, were anathema to Karamchand. Indeed, it is a marvel that he remained *Dewan* (first minister) for so long to a princeling unaccustomed to hearing candor from anyone. He was always a liked and respected man, renowned as a man of absolute integrity.

Karamchand's private and public life were not things apart. He liked what the English call a square meal, and when he had done justice to it he was used to expressing his satisfaction with a series of long belches. This sign his wife and children waited for; it meant that he was pleased. When no noises were forthcoming, everyone worried. Karamchand's wife would disappear into the kitchen and the offspring scatter in every direction. A storm was sure to burst sooner or later. But on the whole Karamchand was an easy person. He was not brilliant, or in any way original, but he was endowed

with the great gift of being open-eyed. That is to say, he never lost his poise on any occasion in his life. He faced difficulties manfully and knew instinctively how to act and with what weapons. He had regular habits. He rose with the proverbial lark and retired when the others were just beginning their evening. His meals had to be served punctually, for he had an appetite that obeyed the clock. And Karamchand provided his family with everything but luxury. He was in the habit of inviting to his house friends of various faiths to discuss matters of the spirit. Though no thinker, he was afflicted with the typical Hindu's latitudinarianism. That is at once a racial virtue and vice. Maybe all things are divine; maybe there is no difference between an Englishman and a Hottentot; maybe everything ultimately issues forth from and sinks back into the *One*. Maybe, maybe . . . yet the world spins and progress comes about because of distinctions and discriminations. This truth—which the Buddha taught—Karamchand's son, and all India, were soon to learn.

Like most of his race Karamchand was slow to judge past or present. Perhaps this was good, for it spared him the torture of thought. He was unaware of the tragic words, "I reflect, therefore I suffer." He was a man of faith; he followed the ways, right or wrong, of his forefathers. He was a man of limited outlook, but that outlook represented the accumulated wisdom of the ages. This is the enormous advantage of belonging to an ancient race: its store of understanding penetrates even the densest of brains.

Putlibai, Karamchand's wife, was even more circumscribed in her views. Religious ordinances were the mainstay of her existence. Almost every day was a holy day for her. She lived mainly to prepare for the journey to the other world. This is not to say that she neglected her duties as wife and mother in any way, for she did not. She applied herself to everything

with single-minded zeal; but there is no denying that her heart and mind were elsewhere.

Of food she partook because she had to. It was a pity that one could not dispense with it altogether, for, she reflected, and once or twice confided to a friend, its end was terrible. It entered the mouth fresh and fragrant, and left the body as waste. As a result of this attitude, she developed chronic constipation. No one knew of her trouble except one or two friends, but Putlibai, instead of worrying, came to feel that she had won a victory over the self. She was approaching, by sheer will power, the state she admired most—that of the honeybee, which is said to absorb all its nourishment within itself.

Meanwhile, Putlibai did her best to show affection for her children, but occasionally, because of grinding pains in her stomach, she lost her temper and said things she had never meant to say. At such moments the children stared at her aghast, wondering what had come over their mother. Among themselves, when they were not afraid of being overheard, they would say that their mama was periodically possessed by an evil spirit. But she was generally so good and so generous to them that they readily forgave her infrequent outbursts.

Putlibai, being a good Hindu, worshiped the *tulsi* plant. While pouring libation over it, she would gaze at the moon and say: "God of my fathers, look after Mohan. Make him a hero among heroes—a man the like of whom has not yet appeared on earth. But make him good."

Whichever temple Putlibai visited—and she went to many—she visited in the company of her little Mohan, who trotted by her side burbling innumerable queries. His mother was very patient with him, explaining everything as best she could. "If I am good, Mother, will I be as great as Arjuna?" Mohan would ask. "Hush! child; you must not mention the

names of the gods and godlike men lightly." So mother and son, hand in hand, walked the streets, trudged the courtyards of holy places, prayed fervently together, and returned home in peace.

Thus the growing Mohan rooted his being in a homescape that was at once tender and timeless. When he had done his school tasks, and shared in his mother's prayers and penances, he retired to his room and looked within himself. In the heart of self he saw, as on a stage, demons contending with angels. Why did not the bright ones, who were said to be invincible, win? How could it happen that demons appeared to gain the upper hand? Perhaps the angels were not angelic enough. To conquer, to subjugate, to hold everything in the palm of one's hand—at such moments Mohan would clench his fists tight—one had to be utterly pure, milkwhite, just as Mama was. She had told him, times out of number, that we are not the insects of an hour, but the children of Brahma the Indestructible. Life was not what happened to you; it was what you put into it. These and other more abstract ideas teased his mind. We are apt to think that children are replicas of ourselves or that they lead a merely sensuous existence. This is a comfortable myth. The fact is, children's thoughts sometimes drift off farther than the farthest star. Only the power of expression is lacking. Gandhi once told Edward Thompson that he was at his profoundest when he was seven or eight years old; later, education and society clipped his wings. He went on to add that he would give much to have been able to listen to Jesus when he argued with the priests in the temple at the age of thirteen. "Then, and then alone, uninhibited truth must have come out. Age brings with it circumspection. Alas, alas, alas, a thousand times alas."

Another idea gripped Mohan's heart and mind. Courage, more courage—that was the supreme virtue. This conclusion is not hard to understand—for Gandhi was himself, as he

confessed later on, a coward. All that he had heard and thought about simmered in his childish mind to produce a potion against his own ailment. Nature was providing an effective antidote.

To fashion himself into a hero, such as surpassed the mighty characters of Indian mythology, became to Gandhi a consuming passion. He would stand before a large mirror and contemplate himself long and intently. Why did his parents say that he was fragile and sickly-looking? He felt perfectly well, and strong enough to lift on his shoulders a part of the Himalaya. He would shrug his shoulders, pick up a stool or chair, hoist it on his back, and try to do an improvised jig. Sometimes he would find himself flat on the floor, ruefully rubbing his knees. But he would soon rise, try the experiment again, and again, and again, until he was able to carry his burden lightly.

Although Mohan was a good lad, who caused no trouble at home or at school, he was by no means a stainless little knight. He was a bit of a pilferer, for example. Receiving very little in the way of pocket money, rarely able to buy what he wanted, he would pick up butts thrown away by his uncle when he felt the need of a smoke. Occasionally he went further and stole coppers from the family servant's pockets to satisfy his craving for "emitting smoke from his mouth." Now a greater temptation assailed him: There was a sweetmeat vendor from whose barrow issued odors that Mohan could not resist, but he had not the money with which to buy the sweets. He stole the money. At one time Gandhi's brother ran into debt. Mohan boldly solved the problem for him by stealing a bit of gold from his brother's gold armlet and paying off the obligation. Then his conscience began to prick him. Had it been right to dispose of something surreptitiously even though he had done it for a good reason? No, he had done wrong. He must make a confession and take his medi-

cine. Having resolved thus, he wrote of his deed to his father, who was then lying on a sickbed. Mohan was not perturbed in the least; he was ready to take whatever punishment lay in store for him.

His father read the penitent's missive and was so moved by the lad's honesty that he shed tears over it. He readily forgave his son and embraced him fervently. Mohan, recalling his father's attitude when he was an international celebrity, said: "My father's tears over my peccancy were not mere tears; they were pearls without price. They taught me that truth is ever medicinal."

From the primary school Gandhi went to the secondary without much success; though he won some prizes, he showed no extraordinary abilities in any direction. All that one could say of him was that he was a good, hard-working lad, who was already beginning to be bowed down by the burden and mystery of this unintelligible world.

A problem that agitated young and old at this time was the secret of the might of the all-conquering Englishman. What made him so superior to others? A jingle was coined, which ran as follows:

"Behold the mighty Englishman!
He rules the Indian small,
Because being a meat eater
He is five cubits tall."

Mohan repeated this, like other boys, but with him words were not mere playthings; they stood for definite facts or ideas. The terms "Englishman" and "meat eater" equated themselves in his mind with strength. So when one of his friends at school told him that he owed his physical prowess, like the Englishman, to meat eating, which he indulged in

been, but followed the example eagerly. He, too, desired to be tough and muscular. However, the first time he ate meat, he felt positively ill, but he persisted in the practice. He was not the boy to give up anything without an adequate trial.

For a long time Mohan continued to eat meat without in the least enjoying it; then his conscience, or what he called later the inner monitor, began to assail him. It was sinful of him to eat forbidden food. Although it diminished him in the sight of his friend to admit that he was going to renounce meat eating, he nevertheless did so, feeling that he had no right to deceive his parents, who were strict vegetarians. He saved himself, or rather his dignity, by adding that he might return to carnivorous habits when there was no father or mother to hurt or displease.

Mohan, like many of us, was a multiple personality, but two beings were uppermost in him—the searcher and the eternal sentinel. Each of these corrected and guided the other.

His studies continued to be unremarkable. He passed his examinations by sheer hard work. As for sports—nothing. Playing with a ball, in one form or another, seemed to him senseless. He never understood, all his life, the philosophy of games—that, as the English would say, they brought us in close contact with the earth, our mother, and our grave.

At the age of seven Mohan had been betrothed to a well known merchant's daughter called Kasturbai, and now, when he was thirteen, he was asked to marry her. He did so with great gladness. He was going to get a playmate all for himself.

How ironical that he who in the years of his maturity became a stanch advocate of lifelong celibacy and late marriage should have entered the state of wedlock when almost a child! Apparently, the gods who preside at our destinies make us arrive at many of our convictions by the process of trial and error.

Mohan knew the girl he was going to marry: she was a neighbor of his, and he saw her often when he went visiting with his mother. He liked her immensely, and was quite proud that he was going to have her as a lifelong mate.

Karamchand was a practical man: he married off two sons and a nephew on the same day. This was both economical and time-saving. The ceremony took place at Porbandar with the traditional pomp. Mohan, clad in rich garments, and almost buried in garlands, sat solemnly holding the hand of his bride, whose face was modestly covered and who was barely two months younger than himself. He behaved, as his elders noted with approval, in an exemplary manner. He neither smiled nor giggled, but listened intently to, without quite understanding, the Sanskrit words the priests were chanting. Another great man, too, took a wife at an early age, and this was Rajendra Prasad, the present President of India. But, as Prasad tells us in his autobiography, he knew not what was happening around him, for he was fast asleep. Not so Mohan; he was all eyes and ears. Years later, writing of his nuptial day, he tells us: "Everything then seemed to me right and proper and pleasing."

Though Karamchand had met with a mishap before the triple wedding took place, having been injured in a carriage accident, he did not let personal discomfort interfere with the arrangements he had made. Mohan, however, had been worried; he loved his father, and hated to see him suffering. Yet, as he observed much later on, he forgot his grief over his father's plight "in the childish amusement of the wedding."

Mohan, although quiet and undemonstrative, was an ardent spirit. When he gave his affection he gave it for good. This trait lasted all his life. Again and again he forgave people who had seemed unworthy of his trust. He was always hoping that since he himself was selfless others would prove

to be the same. In this he was constantly disappointed, but he never changed his own attitude.

Mohan loved his wife dearly, and she returned his affection in equal measure. Indeed, they remained ideal mates to the end. This is not to say that they agreed on all matters. Mohan, a born reformer, wished to educate his wife, who was completely illiterate. So he immediately began to play the part of a schoolteacher. Kasturbai obeyed, but she had no taste for books. After a while she rebelled, and boldly asserted herself. Mohan was annoyed and sometimes lost his temper. Kasturbai would say nothing on such occasions, but just walk away and make herself scarce for a long time.

This irritated Mohan, for he was possessive by nature, and liked to have his wife by his side. Her long absences caused him anguish. He forbade her to leave the house; her constant visits to her friends and relatives must stop. Kasturbai listened patiently to his tirades, and went her own way. One day, when she was about to leave the house, Mohan told her not to do so, but even while he was speaking she quietly slipped out. "Come back, come back!" he shouted. His words fell on deaf ears. He raged. A Hindu husband should be lord and master. He, Mohan, was being defied. Kasturbai, when she showed herself again, would be taught the lesson of her life: she would be told bluntly that, if she repeated her offense, she would be packed off to her parents, bag and baggage.

Kasturbai returned home, after what she thought to be suitable interval, humming a religious tune and behaving as though nothing had happened to upset her. Mohan watched her in dismay. The docile, smiling girl he had seen and admired so much was proving to be quite different. Well, he must assert himself, or resign himself to being henpecked for evermore. The more he thought of the matter, the more angry he became. Working himself up to fury, and pointing a finger

at Kasturbai, he shouted: "You must do as I tell you. I am your husband, and therefore, according to our laws, your god. How can you defy me? Have you no shame?"

Kasturbai said not a word, but continued to smile; then, with a bow, she eased herself out of the room.

This annoyed Mohan even more. Little things that she should do for him remained undone. She avoided him. Yet he found himself helpless. To crown it all, Kasturbai indulged in passive resistance: she refused to eat or to utter a word. She taught Mohan his first lesson in *Satyagraha,* which later on became the creed of millions in India and of not a few abroad.

So this was the playmate he had longed for! She treated him as though his wishes did not count. Mohan reflected on the situation long and deeply. Clearly, force was not practical; Kasturbai merely retorted by using stronger force, the force of her spirit, which seemed unbendable. Gradually he came to the conclusion that he had been wrong, that he had been too strict, and that he had imposed irksome restrictions. He at once changed his methods. Now he told his wife, putting aside false pride, that he had been hard on her and that she must forgive him for his mistakes. He added that he had behaved thus because he loved her. He loved her even in her defiance, and would go on loving her no matter what happened. She was now free to visit whomever she liked.

Kasturbai, who had been standing by demurely while her lord and master spoke, began a smile that broadened as he continued. When he had finished, she said, making her words sound as matter-of-fact as she could: "Now that you are trying to be fair, I'll go to my parents and relatives as little as possible."

During this period of marital skirmishing and adjustment, Mohan had been attending school and struggling to pass his various examinations. As usual, he had few friends, but he

struck up a close relationship with a boy who was somewhat older than himself. Kasturbai instinctively disliked the boy, but Mohan put aside her objections. She was going too far, really too far. Not content with having her own way in other matters, she was beginning to interfere in his personal affairs. There had to be an end to this sort of thing. Mohan, to assert himself, invited his new companion to the house, and afterward went out with him. Kasturbai held her peace, and watched the antics of her husband with amusement. She knew, in some dim way, that her husband was in for a bitter experience, but she could afford to be patient.

A few days later Mohan's friend, who had now become his inseparable companion, took him to a brothel. "Everything is arranged," he said; "all you have to do is to play your part." Mohan found himself seated on a cot by the side of a prostitute who seemed old enough to be his mother. He did not know what to say or do. His glance was fixed on the floor and, inwardly, he was in trepidation. What now? He had come willingly, even eagerly, but now that reality faced him his heart jumped into his boots.

"But what are you waiting for?" the woman cried. "Say something."

Silence.

"Are you deaf and dumb? People don't come here to gaze at the floor."

Mohan still did not know what to do. The woman lost her temper. "You are not only deaf and dumb," she cried, "but also senseless. I have no time to waste on you. Get on with it, or get out!"

Mohan stuck on the edge of the cot, miserable and embarrassed.

Seeing him silent, immobile, trembling like an aspen leaf, the woman became enraged. Catching him by the scruff of the neck, she whirled him round violently, pushed him out

of the room, and slammed the door after him. He went down the staircase, his knees weak as water, followed by peal after peal of mocking laughter.

As he stood in the street, lost and confused, the very passers-by seemed to him to be looking at him in a special way. "God," he prayed in anguish, "let them not recognize me. If Father gets to hear of what I have done, I shall be disgraced for ever. But if Kasturbai knows of my deed, I am—I am—" He was aware that roasting in hell would be a simpler matter. His wife would fix him with her large liquid eyes and shed silent tears. Her wordless reproaches would hurt him as though he had been seared with hot irons.

He ran, like a wild fawn into a wood, seeking refuge from the evil world of evil men. Reaching home, he expected to find a change in Kasturbai: Indian wives always seemed to guess what their husbands had been up to. It was best to confess a sin to them, and apologize for it, rather than let the matter fester like a wound.

Mohan began, for all his resolution, in a roundabout manner. He did not eat the evening meal with his usual gusto, and when he was questioned about his lack of appetite he said haltingly that he had been thinking about his friendship with that big boy in the school. Kasturbai was right: the fellow was no good. Mohan would never be friendly with him again.

Seeing the pleased expression on his wife's face, he grew bolder and related to her the sordid occurrence of the day. She said nothing. She merely looked at him sorrowfully and then walked away, murmuring, "Ram! Ram! Oh, my Ram!"

Mohan, as time passed, discovered even richer treasures in his wife. She could not read or write; she did not know much of the outside world, and she was not, as girls go, fashionable. Yet, though she lacked many graces, she could instinctively distinguish between right and wrong. She fol-

lowed her own leanings, which seemed to be in keeping with the inwardness of Hinduism. If he wished to control her, he had to leave her free to follow him.

Enduring love, Strindberg has said, is a plant that puts its roots down into the darkness, and blossoms slowly. This was certainly true so far as Mohan and his wife were concerned. They began by testing each other, and gradually a camaraderie that went beyond the nagging littlenesses of everyday existence, sprang up between them. They agreed to disagree. Though they could tell each other the blunt truth, they were free to choose their respective friends; and each had an invincible faith in the other.

Mohan and his wife were too young to do any of these things consciously. Some obscure instinct, remote but real, was driving them on to life's fulfillment. Their discords were momentary. Very soon these melted into a harmony. From two disparate temperaments, each in its own way rocklike, there grew up a unity that surprised many. Here were two distinct personalities that knew no division. So at least it seemed for a time. Later on Kasturbai's patience was sorely tried, and her cherished ideas were trampled upon one by one, but she never wavered in her loyalty to her husband. Even though most unhappy, she could not live without him.

Such was Mohan's early attachment to his wife that one night, at a rather late hour, he refused to abandon her embraces when informed that his dying father wished to see him. When, finally, he betook himself to his filial duty, his father was no more. Relating this incident, Mohan blamed himself bitterly and admitted that at the time he was blinded by passion.

Mohan married at the age of thirteen. He was already a father when he passed the Entrance Examination in 1885 at the age of sixteen. He began marital relations quite early, at a time when most other boys are busy gathering laurels in

sports. Although not particularly robust in appearance, he was, some of his surviving friends and relatives tell me, highly sexed. He gave Kasturbai no rest. She, on her side, was not loath to obey. She was young and lusty, eager to please. Soon, however, she asserted herself and curbed what she considered to be Mohan's amorous excesses. But she did this with great tact; she brought out her books and asked him to teach her. She then wore him out with endless questions.

Mohan entered college, but his heart was not in his studies. Indeed, he proved a dismal failure. As he himself has told us, he felt miserable when he was away from Kasturbai. When he was reading his books in his lonely chamber, the face of his beloved would steal across the page and blot out everything for him. He would be reading nothing, gazing into vacancy, while his tears flowed freely.

He abandoned his studies and returned home, saying that he was not cut out to be a scholar. While he went back to Kasturbai, the family called a council of war. What to do with the lad? He refused to graduate, and without that hallmark of distinction what could he do in British India, where a degree was the only passport to a liberal career? His elder brother had not even matriculated. Marriage had been his undoing, for it had absorbed all his energies. Was the same doom going to overtake Mohan?

The discussion went on and on. One member of the family said one thing; another, another; in the end it was a confusion of voices. Indians love to argue; the merits of a course of action hardly count with them, for they all have a point of view, and like to maintain it. Decision—what beast is that? They enjoy talking for the sake of talking; the sound of their own voices has a hypnotic influence over them. To be silent, not to put in a word, is inconceivable.

Someone at the conference, wishing to be original, threw out the idea that Mohan might be sent to England to qualify

for the bar. "This," he added, "is not difficult; everyone that goes to the land of our masters comes back a full-fledged barrister. I have heard it said that all one has to do is to eat the prescribed number of dinners. Mohan cannot fail in this enterprise; he has an appetite that puts most of us to shame."

His words fell on deaf ears. Putlibai, Mohan's mother, and the most important member of the conclave, frowned. What silly things, she said to herself, people do utter. Fancy my Mohan crossing the Black Waters and going to the land of unbelievers and eaters of unclean things for the sake of a mere scrap of paper! Never! After a long silence, she dismissed the gathering, saying that they had gone out wherein they had come. They had talked about it, and about, without contributing anything valuable.

Next day, when Mohan was at breakfast, he heard that it had been suggested by an influential member of his community that he should go to England. Why not? The thought gripped his mind, and he began to dream of going to the very home of imperialism and seeing things for himself. It was even conceivable that he might distinguish himself there. Luck holding, he could return to India and carve out for himself a respectable position in the profession of law.

So arose ambition in Mohan. With a leap he passed from boyhood to the larger sphere of manhood. He did not know what had come upon him; he was being pushed forward by unseen hands that communicated to him something of the *shakti*, the universal energy, of India, the Grandmother of Nations.

II

CROSSING THE BLACK WATERS

MOHAN's mother was strongly opposed to his going to *Vilayat,* the home of Christians and the center of temptations. She expressed her ideas in no uncertain terms. There was no one to contradict her. She was, since the death of her husband, the undisputed head of the house. Her word was law.

Mohan pleaded with her. "Please, Mother, let me go. I promise to be good."

She said nothing. She sat looking beyond her frail son at some far horizon.

"Please, Mother, give me your permission and your blessing."

"But it is so dark there; the sun never shines; people move about as in the netherworld."

Mohan laughed aloud. "Who has been telling you fairy-tales, Mother? England is a very civilized country. Were it not, how could it rule more than half the world? The people there are nice, quite unlike the English we see here. So at least I gather from the books I have consulted."

"Books are no good; they pile lies on lies—to amuse the idle. The only book worth reading is the *Bhagavad-Gita,* and that is our own."

Mohan did not argue; he quietly shifted his ground:

"Mother, I shall not disappoint you; I'll do my best to make you proud of me. After all, I shall be going only for a few years, and will soon be with you again."

"I'm afraid, I'm afraid; there is so much water to cross, and you will be in a boat no bigger than a tub."

"Modern ships are very comfortable and, I tell you, quite safe. There are all sorts of instruments and contrivances that register a storm before it comes. It is no more dangerous to go to England nowadays than to go to the next village on horseback or in a bullock cart. In fact, it is safer."

"Maybe, but what of the wiles of the white woman? She is said to bewitch a boy and keep him tied up in her home as we would a goat."

"I'm not a goat, and what have I to do with strange women? For me, as you know, Kasturbai is enough. Also, I now have a child, so I have to behave like a father."

"But those *Angrezi* [English] like to turn our people into Christians, who worship a dreadful god that was nailed to a cross."

"Mother, the Christians are not evil; Father would not have said so. In fact, I heard him say often that all religions contain truth. But don't worry; I am and will ever remain a good Hindu."

"You promise that?"

"I do. Solemnly."

Putlibai smiled, and a tender light came into her eyes. "Why are you so set on going to a foreign land? Is not our own *Bharat Mata* [Mother India] big enough for you?"

Mohan wanted to say, but did not: "I stifle here; everything is custom-bound; the dead hand of the past lies too heavy on us. I wish to breathe fresh air, the air that has made the English the present-day chosen race of the world." After thinking a little, struggling hard to find a suitable answer, he remarked: "To be somebody in India one has to have an

English diploma. You want me to rise in life, don't you, Mother?"

"That indeed I do."

"Then please let me go."

For a while she was plunged in thought; then, rising brusquely, she said: "All right, my son; have your way." Quickly she left the room, dabbing her eyes. She hated to part from him.

Mohan had achieved the well-nigh impossible; he had succeeded in convincing his mother that his going to England was a necessity. He was jubilant.

Now he had to cross another hurdle—to convince his young wife, Kasturbai, that this long separation from her was justified. He was grieved to cause her the slightest sorrow, he said, but she must understand him and his aspirations. If she did not, who would? She was more dear to him than anyone else in the world, but he wanted to achieve things for her. If he remained here, what prospects had he? After he had successfully finished his studies in England, he added, putting more warmth into his words, he could offer her a richer and larger life. If he himself was a nobody, of what help or use would he be to their child?

Kasturbai was not deceived; she knew that her husband longed to wear the black robe of a barrister, and was putting before her all sorts of reasons for justifying what would be a long absence. "I believe all that you have said but I also believe that you are dying to be a brown Englishman."

Mohan burst out laughing. "Me an Englishman!" he cried. "That is the greatest joke I have heard so far."

"I know what I am saying; you are bewitched. You want to encase your legs in tubes, have a rope round your neck, and a lid on your head. Thus attired, you will feel fine; but I think you will succeed only in frightening children."

And so husband and wife chaffed each other until some of the sting had gone out of the impending parting.

"What of the beautiful women you will be seeing there?" Kasturbai asked, suddenly becoming serious. "They are said to be like moonlight on marble mellowed with age."

"I have gold here. What do I want with anything pallid?"

Kasturbai was pleased; she looked at her husband long and intently. Would she see him again? He was not exactly handsome, but he was basically good and true. He was hers—only hers. If she was a *sati,* that is, a wife loyal unto death, the gods would protect him and bring him back to her unharmed. Still, she was unhappy at the thought of his going, but she concealed her feelings. She went about her household tasks with her usual alacrity. It was noticed, however, that there was a faraway look in her eyes.

Mohan began the preparations for his journey. The family was not wealthy; they had to find the means to educate him for some years in an expensive country. The necessary funds were scraped together by a mortgage on the ancestral home, the sale of the family jewels, and by a contribution from his eldest brother.

Soon the news was bruited abroad in the little town that Mohan, Kaba Gandhi's youngest son, was going for studies to the land of the arch-heathen, the English. The elders of the tribe, grim, bearded patriarchs, rose up in holy wrath. A mere chit of a boy was breaking the sacred rules of his caste. How could he go and live among the spiritually uncircumcised without being contaminated? This must not happen. It had to stop.

After long discussion, a deputation waited upon Putlibai, informing her of the decision of those that mattered in the community. "We are surprised that you have given your permission to Mohan to go to England," they said. Crossing the Black Waters was, for orthodox Hindus, the sin of sins. No land was holy except India.

"It may or may not be right," she replied, "but it is wise."

"We don't think so."

"I am sorry you feel that way, but I have given my approval, which is now irrevocable."

The deputation now sought a new approach: to speak directly to the boy. He must be brought to his senses, or made to suffer the consequences of his action.

Mohan, when spoken to, did nothing to soothe tempers. Indeed, he lost all control of himself and told them what he thought of them. They were, he said, meddlesome, tiresome busybodies who were plunged in the past as in a warm tub. They understood not the present and had no idea of the future. He knew what he was doing and was prepared to face the consequences.

The old men were highly incensed. They had not only been openly defied but insulted to boot. It was now up to them to maintain their power and prestige. They at once issued an edict that Mohan was henceforth an outcast who must be shunned by everyone who was respectable. If anyone went to see him off, he must do so at his own peril, for he would be fined the sum of one rupee. That precious coin was then still worth its true weight in silver.

The elders gathered little money from their fiat, for the only people who saw Mohan off were members of his own family, and these, in all conscience, could not be fined.

Everything was now ready for the great adventure. On September 4, 1888, when hardly nineteen, Mohan set sail for the land of his dreams. He carried with him two glistening metal boxes, one containing a meager wardrobe and the other holding, right up to the brim, eatables.

Mr. Gandhi, as he was now called by everyone on the boat, found the actual journey no tribulation at all. So this was crossing the dreaded Black Waters! Why, there was nothing to it. The sea was a limpid blue, with here and there patches of green, and calm as a lake. It reminded him of the coquetry

of an Indian maiden when displaying the treasures of her trousseau. He laughed aloud. He was glad to get away from the petty restrictions of home life. Now, at last, he was the master of his fate, the captain of his soul. It was up to him to shape his destiny in his own way. He would—he would, he vowed.

Shut up in his cabin, which he had not quitted since the boat started, he looked at himself in the mirror. He was disappointed with his face. His nose was a trifle too long and his ears were much too large, but he had a good strong set of teeth. His smile, which he practiced again and again, was said to be charming. Why not make the best use of it? Even at this early age he knew the difficult art of making the best use of his limitations. He was common, he knew, but he had the commonness of that uncommon person called the Indian peasant. There was something elemental about that. It was as though in him moved the spirit that had lain dumb for countless centuries. He was not aware of all this intellectually, but there was in him a stirring, faint but unmistakable, that spoke of the thunder to come.

His small cabin was cramped, and piled high with luggage. What a lot of things his companions had brought! His own metal boxes, with big labels on them, occupied one corner, and he had difficulty in opening them. There was absolutely no necessity for him to have burdened himself with bedding: the boat provided that. But he did use the new pillow and the new blanket that his mother had lovingly packed for him.

He did not know what was happening in the other parts of the boat; he had not even been to see the dining room or the various lounges. He remained where he was, too shy to move out. The plain fact is, he was afraid of committing a humiliating faux pas. He had his meals brought in to him, and found them an excellent recipe for indigestion. In those days, when vegetarians were considered somewhat absurd,

at least among the English, no provision was made on boats to satisfy their appetite, not to speak of tickling their palate. Mr. Gandhi was obliged to dip into his own reserves. Fortunately, he had brought with him a goodly supply of sweets, dried fruits, and salted nuts, or he would have starved. These English—they were odd. They enjoyed meat, which was no food for the pure in spirit, yet they seemed to be not only doing well but were practically the lords of the earth. He could not understand it at all. If it was sinful to eat the flesh of animals and birds, both of which were God's creatures, and so in a very real sense our brothers and sisters, how is it that the English prospered? Here was a paradox.

Mr. Gandhi felt stifled in the narrow confines of his cabin. He would take a step to get out, walk as far as the door, open it, peep out, and then, seeing some white fellow passenger, precipitately turn back to his cubbyhole. The English were everywhere. Coming from a small country, which was but one-fortieth of the size of India, they seemed to spill over the entire globe. What was the secret of their boundless energy? He must find out.

Mr. Gandhi did a few exercises in his cabin, smoothed his sleek black hair, which was always falling over his forehead, and looked out of the porthole. All he could see was placid sea and blue sky. Occasionally, he espied a bird, and followed its flight with bated breath. Soon the white wonder had become a speck and gone out of view. Glorious to be like that, thought Mr. Gandhi, but, alas, we human beings have no wings. We have to stay here, on earth, and make the best of what we have. He lay down and picked up a book. After a while, he became bored, and began to doze and dream.

And so the days passed, one as dull and inglorious as the other. Mr. Gandhi sometimes heard glad laughter and snatches of song, but these things did not seem to be for him.

Why were people, made in the same divine image, so different in reality? He himself would have liked to sing and laugh and play pranks, but he just did not know how to let himself go. The dam in him was too big; it kept back the tide of his emotions. He contented himself with humming a tune when he was in the bathroom. When the tap gurgled freely, he followed its example. One of his cabin mates has told me that at times he would hear strange noises when Mr. Gandhi was performing his ablutions. He never associated these with any type of singing that he knew. He put them down to spontaneous burblings of a youthful spirit.

A Mr. Mazumdar, seeing Mr. Gandhi moping, advised him to mix with the other passengers on the boat. This had no effect; the young man was too shy and too timid. However, one day, when the very air seemed to come as though strained through silk, Mr. Gandhi took his courage in both his hands and went into the dining room. For a while he stood lost, because no one knew him and no place had been reserved for him at any table. He cut a comical figure, dressed as he was in white flannels and a blue jacket, with a tie that did not match arranged in an absurd knot. His big feet were shod in brown shoes, and his socks, so it is said, were blue. The young man thought that he was dressed in the height of fashion, but the smiles around him made him feel as though he were not a human being at all but a strange apparition. He was about to flee when the chief steward came to his rescue. "This way, sir," he said, leading Mr. Gandhi toward a corner table, where sat three or four jovial Englishmen. They nodded indifferently to the newcomer and went on munching their food.

Mr. Gandhi scanned the menu carefully, while the table steward waited, but he did not know what to choose. He was in a quandary. He wanted to ask what dishes were free from meat, but dared not. He did not want his companions to feel

that he did not care for what they relished so much. He was ever considerate. If anyone must suffer, it should be himself. This was an inborn trait in him.

Mr. Gandhi sweated while he tried to choose a dish. He put his finger on a particular item that sounded vegetarian, but proved to contain meat. To the astonishment of the steward, he ordered afresh. This time he was given rice and boiled vegetables, including green peas that were as hard as bullets. He had been carefully watching his fellow lunchers; he found that in one hand they held a knife and in the other a fork. This was simple enough, but when he began to eat he held the wrong implement in the wrong hand. He managed to convey to his mouth some rice and a bit of boiled carrot, but the peas defied him. He tried to spear them, but they jumped off of his plate as though bent on evading him. By this time the table was full of scattered peas, grains of rice, and lumps of soggy spinach. Why hadn't he been taught how to employ these instruments? Most Indians, rich or poor, used their fingers for the purpose of eating, and how much simpler that was!

The table companions of Mr. Gandhi politely refrained from saying anything. Conscious of his horrible gaucherie, he slipped out, hungrier than ever.

Not being familiar with the winding passages of the boat, he found himself going round and round without finding his cabin. He began counting the numbers, quite forgetting that the first class had similar series. This was lunch hour, and there was no one to guide him.

Mr. Gandhi had a feeling that he was in a labyrinth that became more and more tortuous as he explored it. How to get out? All that he could hear was the steady hum of the engines. For a moment it seemed to him that he was a fly caught on some monstrous wheel that spun frantically. He realized to the full the perversity of inanimate things. Often,

at home, when he had been searching for a book, and had given up the attempt in despair, he ultimately found it right in front of him. On the present occasion, when he asked a passing steward for guidance to his quarters, the man smiled, took him by the hand, and led him a few steps from where he was. "Here you are, sir, and I wish you a pleasant siesta after what I hope was an excellent lunch."

Mr. Gandhi could have kicked himself: Why must he be so awkward? Nothing seemed to come to him with ease; he had to strive for the slightest achievement.

However, at the moment he was famished; the little he had eaten had only sharpened his appetite. How he would like to be at home now! The memory of his mother's delicious cooking made his mouth water; the image of Kasturbai rose before his mind's eye; he could see her filling and refilling his plate, and always encouraging him to eat more. Ah, halcyon days! Would they come again? They must; he was young, and there were many years ahead of him. He must survive his mistakes, and make them a steppingstone to larger triumphs.

Mr. Gandhi tiptoed to his cabin. Thank God his companions were not present; they would surely laugh at him for eating again so soon after lunch. He shut the door, locked it, then made for the precious metal box. He ate salted nuts and sweets until he could swallow no more. Like his father, he had a big appetite despite his frail appearance.

Gradually, as time wore on, Mr. Gandhi became a little bolder. After all, these English were nice folk and were always ready to render some service. He had found the stewards very obliging. So, another fine day, when he was feeling particularly fit, he appeared on the sports deck. Mr. Mazumdar at once took him under his wing and introduced him to some Englishmen. The conversation was desultory at first, but soon it veered round to vegetarianism. One of the passengers, a kindly man with mischievous blue eyes, said,

buttonholing Mr. Gandhi: "Nobody in England eats merely grass. There, because of the climate, you have to have meat." The others present nodded their heads in agreement.

Mr. Gandhi was terrified: What would happen to him when he arrived at his journey's end? Would he have to starve in the largest city in the world? Surely not, though he might have to ask his mother to send him food from India. No matter what the conditions, he must achieve what he had set out to do—win the right to wear the black robe of a barrister. Now, raising his head, he said—the words surprised him, for there was no hint of fear in them—"I think I'll stick to vegetarianism; I'll manage somehow."

The little Mr. Gandhi, oddly appareled, and possessing a flat, outlandish English accent, with the emphases on the wrong syllables, had a forthrightness that was most pleasing. He seemed to be saying what he felt and doing what he actually thought. A rare combination, this, in one so young. The Englishmen to whom he had been introduced took to Mr. Gandhi and tried their best to make him feel at ease in their midst. The object of their solicitude, however, was of different clay. He shied away when most courted.

At last the long and tedious voyage was over. Mr. Gandhi, clad in white flannels and blue jacket, and wearing the same thick brown shoes, stepped ashore and was whisked away, after due formalities, to London, at once the cruelest and kindest city on earth.

III

IN THE LION'S DEN

BECAUSE Mr. Gandhi had made no arrangements for his stay in London, on arrival he had himself driven to a hotel that had been recommended to him. He found it far too expensive, however, and after a day or two he moved to a furnished apartment.

London, in the autumn, has a beauty all its own. It then holds, especially in its parks, an inner and outer glory with which nothing can vie, for the very leaves turn golden brown and resemble precious blossoms. But Mr. Gandhi had no eye for the pageant of nature. His very first day in the British metropolis was a torture. Still unskilled with knife and fork, he sat out his meals in lonely grandeur at his table, imagining that every eye was on him. When the terrible ritual of conveying food from plate to mouth was over, no one spoke to him; no one smiled any welcome to him; people looked at him and through him and quietly passed by.

He went out for a stroll. The keen air had an edge that almost hurt the face, and he pulled up the collar of his overcoat for protection. The sky that only an hour ago was a clear blue was now fretted with heavy clouds, and a thin drizzle came down that he hardly felt at first; but gradually it pene-

trated his garments and made him shiver. He quickened his pace to stimulate his blood, but found the pavements slippery and crowded with pedestrians. Everyone seemed to be in a hurry, and everyone seemed to have somewhere to go; only he, Mr. Gandhi, a would-be barrister and perhaps a man of some consequence in future years, was aimless, a lonely wraith in an alien world. He flitted by, his hands in his pockets and his hat pressed down on his head, almost hurting his big ears. The gaslamps glimmered in the descending gloom like marshlights, making the darkness seem still darker. Shadows appeared to be stalking him. Words reached him that sounded familiar, but he could not quite understand them, for they were pronounced in a manner that was unfamiliar to him. "Piper, piper," he heard a voice call out, and waited for the sound of a bagpipe. Then it dawned upon him that the sound "piper" really meant "paper." He was amused to essay wit, appreciated only by himself: "Piper, please," he said to the newspaper vendor. He tucked the *Morning Post* under his arm and returned to his room. His outing had not been utterly meaningless; he had bought a paper, which he could read in bed.

England, Mr. Gandhi saw, was a difficult country where success came not in the usual way but by understanding the full import of the mysterious phrase "It's not done." He repeated with relish the proverb: "In Rome do as the Romans do." His resolve was made; he would acquire the decorum of an Englishman. Then, he believed in his naïveté, his path would be clear.

He began by buying suitable clothes. Indeed, he went in for a frock coat and a silk hat. Thus attired, he contemplated himself in the mirror. He wasn't so bad after all. He had, it is true, bandy legs, but these were encased in striped trousers of good material. By assiduously studying the knots of other people's ties, he managed to make his own presentable. In

any case, ready-made bows were always available, and he had a few of them in one of his drawers.

The next important thing to do was to learn dancing. Straightway he went to a school and enrolled. The first lesson caused him no perplexity, for it was easy enough and he understood whatever was said to him. But when it came to putting the words he had heard into practice he found his feet as heavy as lead. He had been told that all he had to do to master the art quickly was to follow the music. But how? The rhythms he heard were utterly strange. Instead of making him glide lightly over the polished floor, they confused him. Still, tenacious as a bull terrier, he persevered. He returned home and in the privacy of his bedroom tried the steps he had been taught. After a while, he felt satisfied with himself; at last, he said to himself, he had acquired the knack of it. But the following day, when he repeated in the school what he had toiled over at home, he was coolly informed that he was doing it all wrong. Once again he listened to the instructions and watched the demonstration. The thing seemed easy enough, this dancing, but when he attempted it he simply could not do it. What was the matter with him? Was he lacking in certain perceptions?

In all, he attended the school six times, and at the end knew no more than when he had begun. His instructor, from whom I have the story, told him, not mincing his words, "Mr. Gandhi, you certainly have ears but no ear."

Mr. Gandhi was not quenched. He smiled, quietly withdrew, and said to himself as he came out into the street: "Fiasco Number One. Remember that, Mohan."

But perhaps, he reflected as he walked on, it was not necessary to know dancing to be a gentleman in the English sense of the word. Elocution was more important. So he took lessons in the art of speechmaking. He was told again and again to raise his voice when he spoke, but his vocal cords

refused to go beyond a certain pitch. And then, to add to his discomfort, the English language, as pronounced by experts in the tongue, seemed almost impossible to reproduce satisfactorily. The Oriental gullet, or it may be the Indian one, was unsuited to it. His accents, however much he tried to modulate them, had a flat and slightly squeaky sound. He had imagined that one day he would be able to rival Gladstone or Disraeli as an orator, but now such eminence seemed a sheer impossibility. He did not say to himself, on this occasion, "Fiasco Number Two," but accepted his shortcomings. Well, not every English gentleman was an orator; perhaps if one spoke clearly and correctly, with dignity, that would be enough. He had been to one or two public lectures and had found the speakers on the platform reading from papers, or consulting notes, or talking as though they had a bone stuck in their throats. He knew he could do better than they. As for his flatness of tone, this would disappear, or at least diminish, in the course of time. All he had to do was to listen carefully.

Because he thought at that time that anyone who did not know French was not quite civilized, he gave himself up to the study of the language. Though he pored over books, and obtained proper instruction, French evaded him. First, the words would not stay in his memory; then, to make matters worse, he pronounced them in a manner that made him laugh at himself. Ye gods, he said to himself, why so many languages to confuse us poor mortals? French, he was sure, was a beautiful tongue, full of soft lilting words, but he could not manage it; it was as difficult as trying to capture a dancing sunbeam in a bowler hat.

Mr. Gandhi, while living in his rooms by himself, had heard people below him or above him practicing music in the quiet hours of the afternoon or evening. He liked what floated up to his ears. He would learn to play the violin, he told himself, and immediately engaged a teacher for the

purpose. He continued scraping away at the instrument until, one day, there was a knock at his door and a neighbor told him that if he did not stop making the air mad with cacophony he would call in a policeman and have him brought before a magistrate as a disturber of the peace. Mr. Gandhi was amazed: he had thought that he had succeeded in coaxing a melody out of the catgut, but now he was being told that he was merely making infernal noises. With his usual good sense, he apologized to the visitor for being a nuisance, and promised to put away the offending musical instrument. To himself he said: Fiasco upon fiasco. Yet I must not despair; I'm sure I'm good for something. But what it is I have yet to find out.

Failure did not depress Mr. Gandhi; it made him resort to self-examination. Why had he failed? If he had a thing to do, he did it; if he could not do it, he quietly forgot it, and went on to something else.

He had not given much time to his studies, but now he began to concentrate on his books. He had to pass the Matriculation Examination. This was soon upon him, and he was hardly ready for it. Still, trusting to luck, he appeared and tried to do the best he could.

When the results were announced he found that he had failed. He was not surprised, but reproached himself bitterly for wasting precious hours, and the money that his parents had scraped together for him, in idle pursuits. He was stricken with grief. This is not how his people would have liked him to behave. He had proved unworthy of their trust. He must make amends.

Thought and action in Mr. Gandhi were interlinked; they developed side by side and reacted upon each other. He always reflected deeply on what he had to do, and whatever he did was the result of clarified thinking. He now abandoned his apartment and took cheaper lodgings. He gave up buying clothes, and reduced his expenses to a minimum, confining

himself to living on a shilling and tuppence a day. Indeed, he went so far as to give up the luxury of travel by bus or car. He trudged seven or eight miles in twenty-four hours, and returned home exhausted but determined. This time, come what might, he had to get through his examination.

He did. Soon he enrolled himself at one of the Inns of Court to qualify for the bar. Now everything was clear; all he had to do was to apply himself to his books. Here was no difficulty, for hard work he always welcomed.

By now Mr. Gandhi knew more of London and its ways. He had found out where and at what price he could have the vegetarian meals that he was accustomed to. He was now eating reasonably well and found himself feeling quite fit. But for even greater frugality he began cooking for himself at home. His first attempts were a dismal failure, but by dint of perseverance he managed, in course of time, to produce dishes that he could eat, if not enjoy.

Although he had given up going out for his meals, he had not completely forsaken one or two vegetarians with whom he had struck up a nodding acquaintance. They persuaded him to make a speech at one of their gatherings. He agreed. Mr. Gandhi prepared his oration with great care, but when the ordeal came he found himself tongue-tied. "Ladies and gentlemen," he began, and stopped. "Gentlemen and ladies," he tried again, but could proceed no further. The words he had rehearsed so thoroughly in the solitude of his chamber now declined to utter themselves. There he stood on the platform, waving his arms and making gestures but no sounds.

No one laughed. Indeed, there was no sarcastic comment at all. People sympathized with Mr. Gandhi, and told him that he had nothing to worry about; all that had happened was that he had been the victim of stage fright, a common thing. Experience would change all that.

Mr. Gandhi was deeply moved. The English, he told him-

self, were really good people. In their midst it was possible to flower. At home, in India, a mistake or a failure called forth mockery or downright derision.

He joined the vegetarian society and became its honorary secretary, doing much propaganda for it. The subject of purity, in thought as in daily life, always made a great appeal to him.

Earlier, Mr. Gandhi had made the acquaintance of an elderly Englishwoman, who was so kind as to ask him for dinner at her house once a week. He accepted the offer gratefully. It was a break in his dreary existence.

Attired with particular care, and now feeling more at ease in his English clothes, Mr. Gandhi would repair to the home of his new friend with religious punctuality. His hostess would often ask several young girls to meet him so that by contact with them his awkwardness and bashfulness might be worn away. Mr. Gandhi, as usual, remained tongue-tied, and made no impression on anyone. Most of these Victorian maidens lisped in tones that he could hardly follow, and what little he himself said was even more ununderstandable, his accent being as un-English as possible. However, there was one young lady, staying in the house of his hostess, who took a fancy to him. Being shy, like him, she appreciated his quiet ways, his silence, and his speaking eyes. Mr. Gandhi, who was innocent of all art and artifice, amatory or other, found her company soothing. He relaxed, and sometimes ventured to speak of the marvel that was Aryan India. Here, he murmured, dwelt godlike beings who piled truth upon truth and touched lesser men with the breath of immortality.

In small circles, in intimate groups, Mr. Gandhi could be himself. Crowds or strangers—at least then and for some time afterward—seemed to congeal him or make his humor sardonic.

The girl, as she listened to his tales, more exciting than what was to be found in the Arabian Nights, fell more and more under the spell of this youthful magician from the East. When he was gone, she would discuss with her benefactress whether or not Mr. Gandhi really cared for her. "He seems to like your company," she was told, "so all seems to be well."

Mr. Gandhi, oblivious of the hopes he was unconsciously raising, went about his business blithely, preaching the virtues of cabbages, not kings. He was a constitutional crusader.

On his comings and goings in London, Mr. Gandhi had encountered two Theosophists, who took a paternal interest in him and introduced him to the *Bhagavad-Gita,* which he had heard mentioned again and again with reverence at home but which he had never read either in Sanskrit or in his own mother tongue, Gujarati. The second chapter of this Hindu Book of Books made a powerful impression upon him, so much so that in later years, when he had become a Mahatma and the whole of India paid heed to what he said, he would recite it in Sanskrit at his famous prayer meetings.

At this time Mr. Gandhi also pondered over *The Light of Asia* by Sir Edwin Arnold and over the *Key to Theosophy.* He read the lives of various religious teachers, including Mahomet and Zoroaster. Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship* and Ruskin's *Unto This Last* gripped him. He did not disdain Bradlaugh's *Musings,* but atheism, as creed or philosophy, seemed to him sterile. There is no record that he ever opened the pages of a novel, play, or book of verse. What we call light reading he, apparently, had no time for. He was terribly in earnest.

Mr. Gandhi rarely "joined" anything; he liked to keep himself free, so that he could judge things without any prejudice. For instance, when he was introduced to Mrs. Annie Besant and Madame Blavatsky at some function, and was asked to

join the Theosophical Society, he declined, saying, "With my meager knowledge of my own religion I do not want to belong to any religious society."

He now met "a good Christian from Manchester" who advised him, for the completion of his education, to study the Christian Bible. Mr. Gandhi acquired the precious volume commended to him, and began to pore over it. Parts of it bored him, but the New Testament, particularly the Sermon on the Mount, touched some deep chord in him. Jesus seemed to him not an alien figure, propounding huge, cloudy theories, but a fellow pilgrim who was leading man from the land of eye and touch to the shining gates of eternity.

Of course, while Mr. Gandhi peddled vegetarianism and brooded over the fate of man, he continued to visit, as was arranged, the house of his English woman friend. It seemed to have been taken for granted that Mr. Gandhi would sooner or later propose to the young girl who liked him.

When next Mr. Gandhi saw his friends he sensed a tension in the air; nothing was actually said or done, but the women seemed to be looking at each other in a peculiar, not to say conspiratorial, manner. Soon Mr. Gandhi found himself alone with the younger girl.

She looked at him and smiled; he looked at her and returned the smile. The girl, outwardly prim, but inwardly agitated, did not know what to do; this was the dumbest dumb suitor anyone could encounter. How to make him thaw?

Mr. Gandhi, on his side, was more than puzzled: Why had he been left alone with the girl and why did she give him such marked attention? Instead of feeling pleased, he was highly embarrassed. He sensed that something was going to happen, but he did not know what.

The girl, seeing him silent and preoccupied, determined to

"put it to the touch,
To gain or lose it all."

She asked him, trying to sound as casual as possible, if he liked going to plays.

"I haven't the time for them. Then, frankly, I am economizing."

The girl pouted, but said nothing for a while. At last, twisting her hankerchief around one finger, she asked if he liked cricket. W. G. Grace, the king of cricketers, was playing at Lord's. Wouldn't it be nice to see him performing?

Mr. Gandhi, although he had been in England for more than a year now, had not heard of W. G. Grace. He confessed that he was not particularly interested in cricket; once he had tried to play the game in India and only managed to get a bump on the head for his pains.

The girl now gave up all oblique methods of approach, and boldly suggested that they might go out for a drive in the evening.

Mr. Gandhi now realized what had happened. The girl really cared for him. What was he to do? He had been to blame in the first place; he had concealed from his hosts the fact that he was already a husband and father. This was not altogether his fault; he had been told by certain friends, that a married man was looked upon with disfavor by Englishwomen. He had taken these words seriously. So much the worse for him. But, whatever the cause of his concealment, he had appeared before friends in a false guise. He was horror-stricken. His fault was enormous.

He did not have the courage to tell the girl or her older friend the truth about himself; he did not know what words to use, and speech seemed inappropriate at the moment. He wanted time to think. Quietly he rose, made an excuse, and left the house.

The girl sat there, wondering. Were all Indians as incalculable as that?

Mr. Gandhi passed a sleepless night. The girl, though no beauty, was charming, and she had an attractive smile. The thought entered the mind of Mr. Gandhi that she would be a pleasant intimate companion. He lingered over it for quite a while. Suddenly he woke as from a dream. What was he thinking of? Was he so lost as to think of bigamy? Had he not promised his mother that he would refrain from wine and women? The image of Kasturbai rose up before him: "How dare you contemplate such a thing?" he heard. "Bhārat Mata would crush you as she would crush a cockroach."

Mr. Gandhi, aware of nothing but the backwash of shame, sat down to write a letter to the older friend of the girl he had unwittingly hurt. He tore up sheet after sheet, not satisfied with what he had put down. His words seemed to him inadequate to express his deep regret. Finally, after countless trials, he sent off a missive explaining everything.

His frankness was appreciated; he continued to visit the women as a friend. Years later, writing of this episode, he said: "I thus purged myself of the canker of untruth and never henceforth hesitated to talk of my married state whenever necessary."

Because Mr. Gandhi, though no great admirer of Bradlaugh's ideas, had a profound respect for the man's spiritual integrity, he took special pains to attend his funeral. He stood silent by the graveside, knowing that grief is the only garland that the living can offer the dead.

Having heard much about the marvels of the Great Exhibition in Paris, Mr. Gandhi visited it in 1891. He had trouble in finding his way about since, despite the few lessons he had taken, he knew no French. What few words were familiar to him he pronounced in a manner that no one could

understand. However, he jogged along, now succeeding, now failing, to reach a particular destination.

The Eiffel Tower did not impress him in the least, and he took Tolstoy's view of it as a monument to man's folly. "It was the toy of the Exhibition," he wrote. "So long as we are children we are attracted by toys, and the Tower was a good demonstration of the fact that we are all children attracted by trinkets." Yet, even though he counted every penny he spent, he ascended this gigantic steel structure which seemed to kiss the clouds. It cost him money but he did not grudge the outlay. He threw prudence to the winds and had lunch at the top of the world, so to speak. The price he paid for this was the enormous sum of seven shillings. Now he could tell his friends and relatives that he had not only been to Paris, and seen the great show of the time, but had actually taken a meal at a height which only the birds of the air could rival.

Mr. Gandhi was not blind to the sparkling side of the gayest city in Europe; but the open-air cafés, with crowds sipping all sorts of intoxicating drinks, surprised him. Did these people ever work? Everyone seemed to be enjoying himself. Strange, most strange. We have nothing of the kind in India, he reflected; we toil and moil and yet remain very poor. Had the French discovered a secret of existence that Indians were unaware of?

Mr. Gandhi made many mental notes. He found the French far more friendly than the British, and, judging them by their seeming bonhomie, thought that they were free from all sense of pigmentary aristocracy. This was an illusion that he harbored almost all his life. He could not know, during a short visit, that for the French there is only one civilized people in the world. All the others are for them one or another kind of *indigènes.*

The light and laughter of Paris, though enchanting, soon

wearied Mr. Gandhi; he found his way through the city and sought out the cathedrals and the quiet shrines that bejewel the French capital. He found in them something that touched the core of his spirit; the very stones seemed to be redolent of ages of faith and to convey an emotion that translated itself into spontaneous prayer. Recounting this experience in later life, he says: "The ancient churches of Paris are still in my memory. Their grandeur and their peacefulness are unforgettable."

Perhaps Mr. Gandhi walked about Paris in a dream state, wondering at the various manifestations of Maya, that protean goddess of the visible scheme. Here she was fair as a bejeweled woman in some dainty boudoir; in India she went about in rags, hardly able to hide her many festering sores. He thought it useless to question the why and wherefore of this: it was Lila, Divine Play, cosmic creation and destruction. The drama of life was not composed by us; we have our parts assigned to us; we act as best we can.

Mr. Gandhi had by now acquired more polish and savoir-faire, yet there was nothing sophisticated or cynical about him; his innermost self remained unsullied by temptation. He strictly adhered to the vows he had taken in India—not to touch spirits, not to fall to the guiles of any white woman, not to be untrue to the faith in which he was nurtured. He saw things, he even experimented with some of them, but he continued to be true to himself and to the race to which he had the honor to belong.

His studies for the bar went on satisfactorily. As was the custom then, as it is even now, he ate dinners and kept his twelve terms, equivalent to about three years. These compulsory meals provided him with quiet amusement. As he touched no liquor, he had imagined that he would be looked upon as a queer fish; as a matter of fact, the contrary proved to be true. But let him relate the incident himself: "Two

bottles of wine were allowed to each group of four, and as I did not touch them I was ever in demand to form a party, so that three might empty two bottles and there was a grand night in each term when extra wines like champagne, in addition to port and sherry, were served. I was therefore especially requested to attend and was in great demand on that grand night."

He had no difficulty at all with the prescribed curriculum; it was easy, in fact, so easy that only a wastrel could fail to do justice to it. In those days many "successful" students were sarcastically dubbed "dinner barristers." Because Mr. Gandhi loathed anything secondhand, he did not memorize the notes that were available for anyone who wanted them. "I felt that I should read all the textbooks," he wrote. "It was a fraud, I thought, to dispense with these." It took him nine months of hard labor to go through the Common Law of England. He had adopted a device to prevent himself from falling asleep soon after his dinner; for, as usual, he finished the last scrap on his plate and rose fully satisfied with what he had eaten. This often made him somnolent. Yet he had to study; his future depended on that. So, it was related to me by a friend who knew him then, he would never sit down after an evening meal, but, taking up a book, would read it while standing or moving about in his room. Sometimes his eyes would close, the tome would drop from his hands, and he would be fast asleep on his feet. To overcome this weakness, he tied a long string to a tuft on his head, the other end being attached to a hook in the wall, so that if he moved ever so little he received a jerk. In this manner, and with the help of similar stratagems, he mastered his textbooks. He passed his examinations easily, and was called to the bar on June 10, 1891. On the 11th he enrolled himself as a full-fledged barrister of the Inner Temple in the High Court.

The ordeal was over. He had obtained what he had come

to seek. He lingered no longer in England. The very next morning he set sail for India, his homeland, which he had always carried, as a priceless memory, in his heart.

What had England done to Mr. Gandhi? He had come to the country a callow youth, one who had led so far only a marginal existence, knowing little of the great world outside except what he had read in books, which contained more untruth than truth. He had now been in the stream, and had even partaken of its life-giving waters. England was then the center of all commercial life, where met and mingled peoples from the four quarters of the globe. Art and culture, too, were in a vigorous state, throwing out shoots that spread far and wide. Cricket was the queen of sports, and its votaries were multiplying day by day. In a word, England seemed to Mr. Gandhi to be bubbling with creative energy. Here he had formed not only some lasting friendships—for instance, with Dr. Parker of the City Temple—but had also come to have a genuine affection for the English people as a whole. They were, according to him, innately decent. Years later, when asked about his stay in England, he said that he had been happy there. "Yes, even now, next to India, I would rather live in London than in any other place in the world." Politics, in due course, modified his judgment; to an English friend, H. N. Brailsford, he confided, in a rare expansive moment, that the English were "the best of a bad bunch." He was contrasting then, in his own mind at least, the materialistic preoccupation of the Western world with the search of the East for the pearl without price of which Jesus spoke.

Could Occidental alacrity unite with Oriental meditativeness, there might be, Mr. Gandhi thought, a new dawn on earth. England had given him one gift, a gift that enriched him forever. He now knew, and was soon to spread the word throughout the length and breadth of India, that the individual was sacred, be he prince or peasant, saint or sinner.

IV

DATE WITH DESTINY

ONCE again on the high seas, this time on the SS *Assam*, he had no trouble at the dinner table; he had now mastered the art of handling a knife and fork. Though his innate modesty remained what it had been, his shyness had worn off. He mingled freely with the other passengers, exchanging both ideas and badinage. He now discovered that he possessed a sense of humor, for a fellow traveler, an Englishman, told him so. He was highly pleased at this compliment. In years to come, when things looked grim or gloomy, and there seemed to be no way out, his sense of humor always came to his rescue. It saved him from taking himself and others too seriously.

Because of the inclement weather and the turbulent seas, Mr. Gandhi, not a born sailor, remained for some time in his cabin, trying to resist nausea. To a large extent, he succeeded, because when he wished to do a thing he put all his mind and heart into it.

Although Mr. Gandhi was going back to his own people, returning to a land where the sun threw a noose of gold round every spire and turret, and where Nature was prodigal in its exuberance, he was seized by nostalgia for the cloudy

shores of England. He had left behind a portion of his spirit in that alien land. The moment he used the word "alien" he drew it back; no, England was not alien. He had found little here that jarred on his spirit; in truth, this was a country where, in Tennyson's words, freedom broadened out from precedent to precedent. There was no abrupt break with the past. Newness was welcome, but it had to find a corner in the old framework. Though England was truly a crazy quilt of the antique and the novel, she was not rudderless, for she was guided by the consciousness of the ages.

Mr. Gandhi meditated a good deal on the English experiment with life, and had a sudden insight that, with certain modifications, it would suit admirably the genius of his countrymen; but these thoughts were not fully formed in his mind. He was groping toward a great end.

As we have seen, Mr. Gandhi was profoundly affected by the sterner side of the English experience; its physical beauty, its artistic achievements, and its softer cultural life meant little or nothing to him. Nowhere in his autobiography does he speak of the statuesque beauty of certain English women, or of the pomp of imperial England, or of the glittering theaters and restaurants, or of the many parks which in summer are stormed by flowers. Not a word does he say of that Nature's poetry called the English fog, when the very lamps look like stars that have strayed among men. Of snow, which reminds one at times of the lovely lady Christabel, he was unconscious; nor does he mention the appearance of the moon on frosty nights. The setting sun, which in England sheds its petals one by one, like a huge rose, does not seem to have bewitched him. Mr. Gandhi learned, much later on, that what moved Zarathustra to tears was not the great immensities, but the May fly, the dog rose, and soap bubbles. For the moment, and for long afterward, he was for vastnesses.

Mr. Gandhi reached Bombay in the month of July when the very sky seemed to be on fire. The sun blazed like a torch, and there appeared to be not a breath of wind. He perspired continuously. Discarding his English clothes, which seemed to weigh down upon him heavily, he donned the costume of his kind. Then, with as short a break as possible, he made for his native town.

His homecoming was sad. While he had been in England, his mother had died. The news had been kept from him, so as not to upset him in a foreign land.

Mr. Gandhi wept bitterly. The earth seemed to have yawned beneath his feet. She whom he longed to see, and for whose sake he had toiled hard, was not there to welcome him. Now he would not be able to do all the things that he had meant to do for her.

Mr. Gandhi, though he had a kindly elder brother and many near, dear ones, felt orphaned. The passing of his father, though calamitous, had not seemed to him so terrifying; there was always his mother, with her caressing smile and loving touch. Her very presence had animated the house and given it a distinct personality. Now his home seemed empty to him. When he went to bed at night he missed her warm soft hand on his head. He could not sleep; he tossed from side to side restlessly. Kasturbai was there to soothe and comfort him, but there was no more the ministering angel that was his mother. The umbilical cord that had tied him to her had been cut, to be replaced by the gossamer thread of affection that was as strong as tempered steel.

This was Mr. Gandhi's first experience of deep-felt sorrow, and it unnerved him for a while. But life had to continue; he found that it was his duty to perform certain religious ceremonies connected with the death of a beloved one. He went through these with full belief in their efficacy.

Mr. Gandhi, who had been excommunicated from his caste

for daring to go overseas, was now asked to propitiate the elders by doing public penance for his sin. Cheerfully, he accepted the ordeal. Even when he had fasted for the prescribed number of days, bathed the feet of Brahmans, recited prayers, made suitable offerings in the temple, and gone through other rites, he found that the majority of his tribe still refused to accept him. Years later, when he had become the undisputed leader of the nation, he was still looked down upon by the orthodox of his fold as "an outcast *bania.*" Many of his relatives admired and honored him for his eminence, but they would not eat with him; he remained for them a kind of Untouchable.

Mr. Gandhi had a wonderful knack of turning the tables against his opponents. Whenever he was insulted by Englishmen or, worse still, by Anglicized Indians, as a "merchant," he smilingly replied: "Well, I *am* a *bania;* I want the best bargain for my country—equality of status with the rulers." So, in course of time, he became a transcendental *bania.* Indeed, he was soon to give this despised class in snobbish India a status that they never possessed before.

Mr. Gandhi now had to think of making a living, so he set up legal practice in his home town, Porbandar. Soon he found himself at loggerheads with the British political agent, who treated him with little courtesy. Mr. Gandhi protested, but to no avail. This was the India of imperialism, where a white official was a tiny god. Mr. Gandhi discovered to his horror that the man whom he had annoyed was bent on ruining him. He had no remedy. He contrasted the attitude of the English English with the attitude of the Indian English. They seemed to come from two different hemispheres. The former were kind and fair; the latter were utterly selfish and not a little unscrupulous. He began to think that it was systems that made men what they were. Power had a tendency to corrupt.

His own people, when he turned to them, disappointed him greatly. Formerly he had not seen them as he did now; then he had been aware of some of their faults and foibles, but had taken these to be universal, a part of human nature; but now, looking at his people with detachment, through the other end of the telescope, he found them despicable. They thrived on intrigue—brother against brother, sister against sister, and so throughout all the intervening relationships. Scandal was their meat. One could not take a step without being noticed and commented upon. There was no privacy. Everyone's business was everyone else's business. In brief, life in Porbandar was a puddle in which croaked a few fat frogs. Mr. Gandhi, who had donned a silk hat and taken tea with English girls, found the ceaseless croakings of his people soul-destroying. Stifled by his home town, he fled to cosmopolitan Bombay.

There, he thought, he would be able not only to breathe freely but also to work well. He took a flat, hired some servants, and began to live the stylish life that was expected of a barrister. His brother joined him. He thought that the two of them should be able to command enough money to meet all their needs. Mr. Gandhi, after a long wait, secured a brief. Now was his chance to show what mettle he was made of. He went to the High Court in fine spirits, having thoroughly studied his case and prepared the arguments; but when the great moment arrived, and he found himself facing a grim judge, his courage failed him and he could only mumble and mutter and retire in confusion.

It appeared to him that he was not cut out to be an eminent man of law. Mr. Gandhi felt small. What was the matter with him? Why, whenever he had been aching to achieve an end, had he been invariably frustrated? He recalled a story that had once been told to him by his mother about a person who came to life from death in a half-formed state because

the sorcerer who awakened him could remember only part of the magic spell. The creature went about with one side lifeless and the other bursting with vitality. Was he, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, like this horror, half done, half undone?

Soon Mr. Gandhi's slender resources reached rock bottom. He had been foolish to put up a shining façade, to place so much value upon "face"; but what could he do? Society in India was a complicated affair, like living in a grand hotel, where a person's importance was gauged by the suite he occupied. To live in the servants' quarters was to be treated like a servant. One had to move with the current, or be forgotten.

All this was very well, but the brutal fact remained that unless he made some money he would have to shut up shop. In desperation, he applied for the post of schoolteacher. It carried the miserable salary of seventy-five rupees per month, but he dared not despise it.

When he appeared for the interview, the principal asked him: "I hope you are a graduate?"

"I'm afraid I'm not."

"Sorry, we can't offer you the job."

"But I am a London matriculate. I took Latin as my second language."

"Interesting, most interesting; but, as I told you, we want a graduate—one who has passed the B.A. examination. I hope I am making myself clear, Mr. Gandhi?"

"Quite." Mr. Gandhi walked away, head down, his spirit nearly quenched. Was there no place for him in India? Must he rot? The money and labor he had spent in England—were they to no purpose? The home, sweet home that he had dreamed of in faraway England, with tears streaming down his cheeks, what was it in reality? A heartbreak house such as Bernard Shaw had never imagined. It was unthinkable to

set up practice in his own part of the world; that English ogre, the political agent, was still there. Time was passing, and Mr. Gandhi, for all his frantic efforts, was not able to make ends meet. His enforced idleness angered him. Like a litany, the words ran through his head: "What to do? What to do?"

Things had reached their worst when an offer came to him from a merchant to represent him in a complicated property case in South Africa. He clutched at the life line thus thrown to him. It did not offer him much—just a year's contract, first-class return fare, and £105 as fee.

Mr. Gandhi left for the new country, happy at the thought that he would now be able to send some money to his brother for household expenses. So began the adventure that was fraught with such great consequences. It was not just a little brown man, outlandishly dressed in turban and a tight-fitting coat buttoned up to the chin, who was going to the Dark Continent, but a brooding storm.

Sheer necessity it was that drove Mr. Gandhi from his motherland to South Africa. It is interesting to speculate what would have happened if he had succeeded as a lawyer in Porbandar, Rajkot, or Bombay. He might then have ended his days as a man of some property, his breast starry with the dishonor of British titles. And that would have meant his political end in India; he would have gone down in history as one of the many hangers-on of white imperialism. What a fate to contemplate for him who was to become "The Father of his Nation"!

But Nature had other designs for him; to prick him, to goad him, to mold, as it were, his very spirit, it made him drink the bitter cup of want and humiliation. Mr. Gandhi was not what it is now fashionable to call an extrovert. Had

he been one, he might have been overwhelmed, and done something desperate; but he was ever inward gazing, and in reflection all calamities seemed to him little episodes in a drama whose end he could not see but which beckoned him on.

On the voyage out, lasting many days, Mr. Gandhi felt inadequate and remorseful; inadequate because he had failed to create a niche for himself in his native land; remorseful because, ever since his return from England, he had been able to give his wife and children nothing but the debris of his days. First, it was the passing of his mother that had overwhelmed him; then, before he could look around, he had to think of earning a living. There had been little or no time for Kasturbai.

He remembered her as last he saw her. That, outwardly, she seemed to be the same as ever was true; but there was a mist in her eyes. She seemed to be carrying a burden on her mind. What it was he could not make out. He was worried that very probably she put him down as the idle dreamer of an idle day. That she still loved him was undeniable; but did she respect him? How could she? He had done nothing but indulge in tall talk. Kasturbai, he knew, hated empty words; she believed only in deeds, however small. She had a quality that he himself did not possess: being by nature still, she could instill quietness into others. He himself tended to see things in running water. No wonder what he perceived was blurred or distorted.

"Be quiet, my soul, be quiet," he murmured, as he paced the deck and looked at the miracle that is the sky when all the stars are shining. He had to tame the something within him that would not let him rest. What this was he did not know as yet; years later he called it the inner voice. In reality, it was his daemon. He had to come to terms with it.

But how? He could not tell at the moment. All that he was aware of was that he had to submit to a Will greater than his own.

His immediate problem was to do full justice to the case that had been entrusted to him. He studied it carefully and felt that he could cope with it.

He did not know much about the condition of his countrymen in South Africa except that they lived, on the whole, a wretched kind of existence. He was anxious to see things for himself.

He arrived in Durban in May, 1893. Immediately he was aware of something sinister, something that he had never experienced before. The white man in this land looked upon him and his brown skin with unconcealed contempt. He was shown scant courtesy by the officials, who treated him as though he belonged, in Kipling's phrase, "to a lesser breed."

Mr. Gandhi was shocked. He had never known anything of the kind in England, where he had spent three years. There, on the contrary, he had received attention and even affection. Here, in a less advanced country, among people who were under the suzerainty of Britain, he, a member of the empire, was dismissed as though he were just dust under their feet. He was furious. However, he resolved to be patient, to give things a fair trial.

He met his client's solicitor, who was to plead one of the cases here, and explained to him all the details of the Indian side of the affair. Having finished this task, he decided to visit the court, to find out for himself how the judges functioned here. Scarcely had he taken his seat by the side of his white colleague, in whose company he was, when he was ordered to remove his turban. He had kept on his headgear because such had been the custom in India. He had no idea that he was insulting anyone. Rising quietly, he explained his point of view in a few dignified sentences. No attention

was paid to what he had said. He was asked in sharper tones to remove that "thing" from his head or get out. He protested. His words fell on deaf ears. He had no option but to leave the court.

Mr. Gandhi now realized, within forty-eight hours of his arrival, the horror of being nonwhite. As a dark man, he was supposed to be an inferior being. He had no rights as a citizen or as a visitor in the Colony. He was utterly disillusioned. In his bitterness he said, "I have made a mistake in coming." The fact is, he had not been informed of the ghastly conditions prevailing in South Africa, where the whites treated the colored races as people of no consequence.

The blow to Mr. Gandhi's pride was shattering. Even though he himself belonged to a subject nation, he was in no sense a doormat. He was the child of a country that had, in many ways, added to the sum total of human achievement. When his so-called masters, the British, were living in trees, painted with woad, Indians had gone from refinement to refinement until they could go no further. Now he was being looked upon as something unclean.

Mr. Gandhi's troubles had just begun. The last suit in which he was engaged to play his part required his presence in faraway Pretoria, which could be reached only by way of Charlestown. This meant a long and tedious journey by train and coach.

There was no legal barrier against an Asian's traveling first class, but those who knew the country well never attempted to do so. They were fully aware that the white settlers did not like it. Mr. Gandhi had been advised by his client, Dada Abdulla, to purchase a bed ticket. He ignored this, and purchased a first-class one, and carried his blankets and pillows with him. For a while nothing happened; Mr. Gandhi rolled on in reasonable comfort. At the Pietermaritzburg Station, however, the train guard came up to him and asked him to

get out of the compartment and occupy the baggage car. Mr. Gandhi's indignation knew no bounds. "Why should I?" he cried. "I have paid for my ticket."

"Don't argue; do what you are ordered to do."

Mr. Gandhi refused this unreasonable demand. After all, he thought, I am not a coolie; I am a barrister.

The guard now called a police constable, and had Mr. Gandhi's luggage thrown onto the platform. Even while Mr. Gandhi was protesting, the railway official blew his whistle and the train steamed off.

So there he was, left stranded because his skin was not white or near white. He had no alternative but to make for the waiting room, which was cold and without lights. Not having his overcoat with him, he shivered; huddling in a corner, he gave way to gloomy thoughts. Must he be trampled upon? His first impulse was to drop the unequal struggle and return home. But what sort of refuge was that which allowed him only a hand-to-mouth existence? In any case, it was stupid not to face difficulties. Safety first, according to Mr. Gandhi, belonged to the vocabulary of cowards. He had to stay to fight.

It was not a case of himself alone; it involved all Indians, and the dignity of his motherland. As he reflected on the situation, it seemed to him far more complicated than he had imagined; it was, first, foremost, and above all, East versus the West, the colored man against the white. The word "coexistence" had not yet been invented, but to his mind it was the one that summed up the coming struggle as he saw it then. People, no matter of what class, color, or creed, had to learn to live together, so that each could blossom in his or her own way. To Mr. Gandhi, as he peered into the gloom, hardly able to keep his teeth from chattering, *conscious care of all* seemed the truer religion, the religion of the future.

When morning came his mind was made up: he would

stand up for the rights of his race, cost what it might. His path was clear. The gleam that he had seen on occasions, and which had led him on in directions that he did not quite know, had now become a beacon light.

Mr. Gandhi had first to make for Charlestown, having failed to secure any satisfaction by wire from the general manager of the railway. He was deeply hurt; British decency was not for export. There was no doubt that he was, so long as he remained in this territory, no better than a coolie. It was color, not quality, that counted here.

From Charlestown Mr. Gandhi had to go on to Johannesburg, and this stage of the journey had to be accomplished not by train but by coach. He had his ticket, but when he went to occupy his place the agent told him, without any circumlocution, that there was no room for him. The fact was that he, a brown man, could not be allowed to mix with white passengers. Insult was being added to insult, but Mr. Gandhi bore everything with fortitude. He accepted an outside seat on the coach box.

About three o'clock they reached Pardekoph, and the coach halted. The driver, who had been sitting in a cramped position, now picked up a dirty sackcloth, flung it on the footboard, and, turning to the young Hindu lawyer by his side, barked: "You there, sit here. I wish to smoke in comfort."

Mr. Gandhi stared at the beefy Dutchman in amazement. How dared he speak to him in that manner?

"Move on, will you? And don't stare at me as though you've seen a ghost."

Mr. Gandhi was too astonished to say anything, and sat where he was. Suddenly he received a blow in the face; before he knew what was happening he was hit again. He lost his balance and nearly toppled over. He clung to the rail for support.

The other passengers, having heard angry words and the thud of blows, descended, and saw a strange spectacle. The Hindu barrister was being pummeled by the hefty Dutchman. They intervened, and persuaded the man to let the "poor beggar" alone. There was something atrocious even in their kindness.

The vehicle moved on, and the passengers soon forgot the incident. After all, it concerned a colored man, and a colored man was to them no more important than a crow. The driver, however, was boiling with rage; he had been frustrated in his design of treating this "nigger" as he deserved to be. Now and again, removing his pipe from his mouth, and blowing the smoke into the face of Mr. Gandhi, he said: "Wait till we come to the next stop. I'll show you what it is to disobey a white man."

Mr. Gandhi knew that he could expect further humiliations, but fortunately, as he himself put it, "At Standarton the coach was changed and the rest of the journey was accomplished without incident."

Arrived in Johannesburg, Mr. Gandhi went straight to the Grand National Hotel. He wanted decent quarters where he could rest and recuperate from the horrors of the journey. The poor man did not know that he had invaded the holy precincts of the white man. No room, he was told; only whites of quality stayed here. He went to another hotel and another, and then to a third, a fourth, and a fifth. There was no place for him. He had been proud, like most of his countrymen, of his brown skin, but the whites had no respect for it. He was not angry with them, but sorry. He remembered the words he had read with a friend in England: "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do."

Mr. Gandhi was worn out. He felt lost; he was in a place worse than the Congo. In the primeval forest, untrodden by the foot of man, one could at least lie down under the shade

of a tree. Here, in this jungle of bricks and mortar, what could one do?

Recording his nightmarish experience, he later observed: "God who is the Almighty Searcher of all hearts soon put my determination not to run back to India to a full test. I suffered further insults and received more beatings on that journey. But all this only confirmed me in my determination to stay on in South Africa."

He knew what he was up against. Men of color, no matter where they came from, were doomed to be helots unless someone stood up for them and demanded equal treatment for them. He would fight. He must. There was no other honorable course open to him.

Had Mr. Gandhi wavered in his resolution, or declined to pick up the gauntlet, not only would all have been lost for his compatriots in South Africa but there would have been no forging of that secret weapon, called *Satyagraha,* which finally cut the knot of British imperialism in India. St. Paul, talking of Jesus, says that the captain was made "perfect through sufferings." The same thing happened to Mr. Gandhi: in anguish he brooded over the fate of his countrymen, until light broke through when the night of his soul was at its darkest. Everything came to him in a blinding flash. He now knew what to do; God willing, he would yet confound his opponents.

In certain parts of India there is a practice known as *sitdharna.* That is, when a man refuses to pay back the money that he has borrowed, his creditor camps outside his door, refusing to eat or drink until the debt is cleared. This invariably succeeds. No one, however selfish, likes to have a righteous man punishing himself for a fault that another has committed. To have such a one dying on one's hands is considered the sin of sins.

Mr. Gandhi decided to make use of this time-honored and

well tested weapon, which could not be easily neutralized, because it was a soul force, against the oppressor in South Africa. A gulf, however, divided conception from execution. He had to prepare a proper plan for his campaign.

He left for India, which he had not seen for some years. He was happy to be back home. There is something in one's native environment that tightens the fibers of one's being and makes one participate, however feebly, in the collective unconscious of the race. Mr. Gandhi felt rejuvenated. He was now ready to wage the struggle that faced him thousands of miles away in an alien land.

He returned to South Africa with his wife and children. Immediately friends and admirers surrounded him, urging him to do something to alleviate their misery. Mr. Gandhi threw himself into the fray. Again and again he, his family, and many other Indians, rich and poor, sophisticated and illiterate, suffered insults and injuries before satisfaction was obtained.

Mr. Gandhi worked unremittingly: he organized meetings to make his countrymen aware of their rights and wrongs; he drew up petitions; he wrote to the Colonial Secretary in England protesting against the treatment meted out to Indians; he collected funds; he founded a paper called *Indian Opinion;* he carried on his work as a lawyer; he attended to the sick and the needy in his community. In a very true sense, truer than of any other man known to us in history, he was the servant of his countrymen.

For twenty years or more this frail Indian fought a system, at whose head were determined men like Botha and Smuts, until his opponents were forced to offer an honorable truce.

It is sad and saddening to remark that, despite his most heroic efforts, the results obtained by Mr. Gandhi were illusory. He seems to have written an epic on sand. Even today, after nearly half a century, when world opinion and the

conscience of man are more awakened than formerly, the colored man yet remains in bondage in South Africa. That great land, however progressive it may seem on the surface, is at heart still dark. It seems never to have heard the words, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it."

But Mr. Gandhi in South Africa achieved a sense of mission. He knew now that if he were to succeed in helping his people, he had to begin by making himself as pure as possible. One by one, he had to wash away the stains of selfhood. He had to attain a pure capacity.

He began by reducing his wants. His food now became simpler. Because a barber in Pretoria had turned him away, he bought clippers and began cutting his own hair. He refused to send his children to school because that privilege was not being accorded to the little ones of his countrymen; he taught them at home. He now did not send his clothes or the clothes of his family to the laundry but washed them at home. Indeed, he taught the skill to his wife, who, not to put too fine a point on it, must have found him a terrible nuisance. He also experimented in the kitchen, and prepared dishes that only he could enjoy. It is said that he tried to make shoes for himself and his children, but gave up the attempt when the soles came off after a couple of days. In a word, if Mr. Gandhi could sweep the sky, he would have done so.

That he boosted the morale of his countrymen in South Africa by giving them a sense of national unity and human dignity is clear enough; but that he was often severely critical of them is not so well known. He told them that they were lacking in manners, that their habits were unsanitary, that they dressed badly, that they worked long but unsystematically, that they tended to be miserly, and that, finally, they had no pride in their race, which had seen the Pisgah-height when other men elsewhere slept or wandered in jungles and

deserts. No one was hurt by his brutally frank words, nor did anyone protest; all knew that what he was saying was for their good.

Mr. Gandhi possessed a rare gift: because he trusted, he received trust in return. This is seen in its fullness when we examine the relationships he established between himself and others—whether with his own countrymen or with Europeans. Everyone who came in contact with him sooner or later fell under his charm. Apparently the fierce light of South Africa, where the very shadows seem warm, burned out the dross in Mr. Gandhi's nature, leaving behind nothing but an infinite tenderness. Living and working in a hostile country, where pitfalls awaited him at every turn, he won the esteem and affection of the most unlikely people.

A man who did much for Mr. Gandhi in South Africa was a certain Mr. J. Doke, a missionary entirely dependent for his living on his parishioners, the white settlers. He discovered in the young Hindu lawyer, as early as 1898, true spirituality, a kind of Christianity that many Christians did not possess, and he boldly proclaimed this conviction to his congregation. He was one of those good men of God who see in every human being a fellow pilgrim. He is not only the earliest biographer of Mr. Gandhi but he was also his co-worker for many years, at one time editing *Indian Opinion* and often contributing something valuable to its pages. Once, when Mr. Gandhi had been assaulted by some misguided hooligans and left bleeding on the ground, he took him into his house and nursed him tenderly. He had for the young man a special corner in his heart. He found him at once frank and fearless, one who had his feet firmly planted on this earth and yet seemed to be hearing a voice that came from beyond the bourn of silence. This union of hereness and thereness made a tremendous impression on Mr. Doke.

Mrs. Doke, too, liked Mr. Gandhi, whom, within a very

short time, she began to treat as a son. Her attitude is best expressed in the words of C. F. Andrews, one of the truest friends of India. Speaking of an occasion when he and Mr. Gandhi had gone to see Mrs. Doke, he says: "Her face was bright as she greeted him, and she gazed at him with love as he paid her reverence in Hindu manner, as a son paid reverence to a mother. When I watched her eyes I could see they were full of tears. All the motherhood came out in her eyes as Mr. Gandhi sat on a stool beside her looking up into her face. Eagerly she asked many questions about himself and his health. With a mother's anxious care she noticed how thin he had become and urged him to take more care of his frail body. Then she heard of Mrs. Gandhi's great weakness after a recent illness and a feeling of grief came upon her. It was wonderful to note her utter unselfishness."

By being unaffected, Mr. Gandhi had made the Reverend Mr. Doke and his wife his lifelong friends and co-workers.

Mr. Albert West, a printer, first met Mr. Gandhi in a vegetarian restaurant, and soon their acquaintanceship ripened into friendship. Later, abandoning everything, Mr. West, accompanied by his wife, sister, and mother-in-law, went to the Phoenix Farm, which the Indian barrister was running on communal lines, to live there on an allowance of three pounds a month. He and the members of his family helped the Indians to struggle against the rulers of the country as best they could. Miss Ada West, we are authoritatively told, "at one time or another looked after the little children, taught them English, cooked in the common kitchen, swept the houses, kept accounts and did composing work in the Press." Mr. and Mrs. West took charge of *Indian Opinion* when practically all the prominent workers in the little colony were in jail. The old mother-in-law was by no means idle; she did her part of the chores cheerfully.

Mr. and Mrs. H. S. L. Polak, both highly cultured and both

fine humanitarians, did yeoman service to the Indian cause in South Africa, and for many years continued to be the trusted lieutenants of Mr. Gandhi. They drifted away in 1920, ceasing to see eye to eye with their former leader. Helping the downtrodden in a Colony was one thing; imperiling British imperialism in India was something quite different. It frightened them. They began to criticize Mr. Gandhi and his mission. However, there is no doubt that the Polaks, husband and wife, were of immense aid to Indians at a crucial moment.

A man of different type, one whom Mr. Gandhi describes as a person of strong feelings, wide sympathies, and childlike simplicity, a German, who might be expected to have little or nothing in common with struggling and suffering Indians, joined their cause. He gladly gave his large farm of eleven hundred acres to Mr. Gandhi when the question arose of accommodating the families of those imprisoned for *Satyagraha*. It soon grew into a fine international colony. The world knows it by the name of Tolstoy Farm. The selfless donor, Mr. Henry Kallenbach, was an architect who designed and built the houses for the various families that had to find a new home. He was deeply attached to Mr. Gandhi and was ever ready to do any work that was assigned to him.

The Europeans so far mentioned worked directly under the guidance of Mr. Gandhi and soon became his devoted followers or personal friends. But others helped the Indian cause in no uncertain manner too; they are what might be called, in Victor Hugo's phrase, "God's gladiators." A little must be said about them here.

Mr. Hosken was well known in the country: he was president of the Association of Chambers of Commerce in South Africa and a member of the Legislative Council in the Transvaal. It was not quite easy for him to take the side of what was considered a "coolie community," but, braving hostility,

both open and hidden, he became chairman of the Committee of European Sympathizers with the Passive-Resistance Movement. He and his organization rendered great service to the disinherited Indians as active helpers in the struggle and as peacemakers between the government and the satyagrahis. Mr. Hosken sought no reward; even fame as a good man did not interest him; all that he was concerned with was to follow the right in scorn of consequences.

Miss Emily Hobhouse, daughter of Lord Courtney, was one of those rare persons who owe loyalty to nothing but truth and fair play; she had shocked many by denouncing the Boer War and publicly praying with the indomitable W. T. Stead, the famous English journalist, for the defeat of England. She went to South Africa to see what was actually going on there, coolly brushing aside the threats of the military authorities. It was she who bravely told the world of the appalling conditions in the various concentration camps in which Dutch women and children were herded together like cattle. This was an eye-opener to the public in England, and it made the authorities uncomfortable. They had to act, or the name of England would be besmirched forever. Not satisfied with removing the evils that multiply during a war, Miss Hobhouse visited the Boers and aided them in every way. She was becoming a nuisance, and after much consultation she was deported to England as "an undesirable person." Her sympathies being what they were, she had naturally great influence over the Boer statesmen; they regarded her as one of them. In 1913–1914, when the *Satyagraha* struggle came to a crisis, she happened to be staying with General Botha as his guest. Mr. Andrews, who was present at the negotiations between Mr. Gandhi and the Transvaal Government, tells us that there is not the least doubt that during these dark days "the influence of Miss Hobhouse with the Boer leaders did much to pave the way to a

reconciliation." He goes on to add that, in his unbiased view, of all those who helped the Indian cause with timely service and sympathy "the greatest and most heroic figure was Miss Emily Hobhouse." She was a Christian who knew what Christianity was.

Miss Molteno, sister of the Speaker of the South African Parliament, was a daughter of the soil, her parents having settled down in the new country before she was born. She loved everything around her, the blue sky, the rolling plains, and the very birds in the trees. Here nature was fecund and fierce, with quiet corners so lovely that it seemed some divine artist had designed them in a moment of pure joy. If the tender and the terrible can subsist in the same country, why not the black and the white? Miss Molteno had no color prejudice; the very idea seemed to her absurd, something that went against the rhythm of life. She found the legal racial discriminations of her country a blot on its escutcheon. She began to say exactly what she thought; her utterances and activities had special force, being related as she was to someone very high in the ruling circles. Many of her countrymen were furious for her outspoken sympathy for Mr. Gandhi and his cause; they criticized her, often using unparliamentary language. She did not mind; she was prepared to suffer ostracism rather than creep back into what her conscience would not permit. To her, passivity was complicity. She was firmly convinced that the most urgent mission of womanhood in South Africa was to cement unbreakable ties between the different races that dwelt there. There had to be an honorable place for Indians. And why not? They had played not a little part in the development of the country. If she was to be true to her sex, it was her duty to work for that richer harmony that arose out of discords. She never wavered in her conviction; in every way, from within and without, she helped Indians. For Mr. Gandhi she had deep regard; watch-

ing his activities quietly, she found in him a man who bore immense burdens without complaining. This conduct moved her to tears. Not to help this man and what he stood for was to fail in the final test. She recalled the dream that had visited Pontius Pilate's wife, and brooded over it. Righteous man, yes, that was it. She had to deal with one who, however falteringly, had his face turned toward the holy hill of God. He was fey, but that was a sign, wasn't it?

Mrs. Drew, sister of Lord Gladstone, the then governor general of South Africa, and daughter of the famous liberal prime minister of England, was an unusual woman even among the unusual. She was highly educated and had meditated on some of the masterpieces of Indian literature and had, like Schopenhauer, drawn spiritual sustenance from them. She had heard all about the Indian question from Mr. Andrews, the right arm of Mr. Gandhi, and had been profoundly moved. For Mr. Gandhi and his struggles she had not merely verbal but true sympathy; she invited him and his wife to Government House in defiance of everyone, and gave them hospitality. The more often she saw Mr. Gandhi, the more she was drawn to him. The man was nothing to look at; in fact, he was quite comical with his protruding ears and unruly hair; his nose, too, was a trifle too long, and seemed to smell the words that his mouth uttered; yet, when he spoke, there came a light in his eyes that seemed to burn away all unpleasant thoughts. In his presence, whether alone or in company, one could not be what the Chinese call "two-minded"; his gentle gaze, innocent as a child's, seemed to see through everything. She became, like many others before and after her, a captive of his sincerity. She was moved to uphold this man and his holy war against inequality. Of her, Mr. Andrews says: "While others in South Africa were boycotting the Indians on the tramways, railways and footpaths, she received them in her own house as her guests and

friends." Here was a great and good Englishwoman, one who renews our faith in life.

Of Olive Schreiner, the gifted novelist, a good deal has already been written; the least thing moved her and the greatest could not frighten her. She recognized integrity and inspiration when she saw them. In Mr. Gandhi she found, as she looked at him, not a lone watcher of the skies but someone who heard the sad music of humanity. To this man, the miseries of the world, particularly of his own people, were misery, and would not let him rest. She gave him all the help, moral and material, that she could. Speaking of him to Havelock Ellis, who discovered her as a writer, she said: "Mr. Gandhi spoke as though he were a mere echo; echo of what? Of no recognizable human voice; it was as though the Collective Unconscious of his country was muttering and mumbling through him. Have you ever known a whole nation to speak at the same time? Mr. Gandhi, I knew, was India, and India was Mr. Gandhi. How could I remain deaf to this vastness? The tones, though gentle and caressing, even pleading, had in them an undercurrent of oceanic thunder."

There were many others who sided with Mr. Gandhi in his campaign against Boer iniquity, but it is not necessary to mention them all; these played a little part, and passed on. What was it that made so many foreigners, distinguished and not so distinguished, forget their common allegiances to side with what then seemed a negligible quantity and quality? Mr. Gandhi, ever modest, says, speaking of those that came to his rescue: "No other effort whatever was made during the struggle to enlist European sympathy beyond the effort, if effort it can be called, involved in adherence to truth and truth alone." These men and women, he adds, were moved by the inherent power of the *Satyagraha* movement. Indeed, "all truthful movements spontaneously attract to

themselves every kind of pure and disinterested help." True enough, yet not quite. Movements are nothing without men. Because Mr. Gandhi spoke with conviction—that is, in words that were effortlessly felt to be true—people, his own and other, listened to him reverentially. He was, they somehow knew, their conscience.

But to come to Mr. Gandhi's private life. In South Africa were sown the seeds that came to their bloom later in India.

Mr. Gandhi kept a peculiar kind of household, one that would have appealed to Tolstoy, Gandhi's, so to speak, spiritual mentor. Here prevailed complete equality. White, brown, or black—all were treated with the same unfailing courtesy and understanding. Mrs. Gandhi found it difficult to understand the ways of her husband, and often found herself at loggerheads with him.

During Mr. Gandhi's stay in Johannesburg, as a rising advocate, he had four clerks, who belonged to different Indian castes and religious persuasions. Not minding these differences, he asked them to stay with him and share his table. He completely forgot that his wife was an orthodox Hindu and would object to his overkindliness. He took her acceptance of the situation for granted. Kasturbai, good spouse that she was, found this too much; she was often disturbed, though she showed no outward signs of it. She thought her lord and master a little too self-centered and even insensitive. Why couldn't he respect her religious and societal scruples? He had a right to do what he liked, but he certainly had not the right to inflict his views on her. She found in him a core of hardness that puzzled her. How could he, a man who was gentle to everyone, be so regardless of her desires? She puzzled over this often, and wept disconsolately in the quiet of her room.

Not content with making his family sit at the same table

with his clerks, Mr. Gandhi coolly asked his wife to clean their bedroom utensils. As he himself did this job at times, he saw no harm in Kasturbai's doing it too. His wife was utterly unable to see eye to eye with him on this matter. To her, and to most of her sisters in India, this was the filthiest of all work, fit only for Untouchables. Had her husband brought her to a foreign country to reduce her to the lowest human level possible? This time, forgetting the unwritten law of implicit obedience in a Hindu wife, she protested. She not only protested but put up a fight. And when an Indian woman fights, which is a rare occurrence, hell breaks loose.

Kasturbai defended the caste system, saying that it was what had kept India from going to the dogs. He, by his thoughtlessness, was undermining one of the basic teachings of her faith. He poked fun at her notions, adding, rather sarcastically, that she knew nothing of the inwardness of Hinduism. "Have you read the *Bhagavad-Gita* or the *Upanishads* or the *Vedas*?" he asked. "You have not."

"Maybe not, but I know what my mother taught me. She heard it from her mother, who heard it from her mother, and who, in turn, heard it from her own mother, so it must be right."

The argument continued, getting more and more acrimonious. Then Kasturbai's good sense came to her rescue: she took the terrible pails, went out, and emptied them. When she returned, she was crying.

Instead of sympathizing with her, or saying a kindly word to soothe her ruffled feelings, he was angry with her because she was doing the distasteful task gingerly and not, as he had expected, cheerfully. He shouted at her, "I will not stand this nonsense in my own house."

She immediately retorted: "Keep it to yourself—this miserable hovel."

At this point it is best to let Mr. Gandhi speak for himself: "I forgot myself," he says. "I got hold of her and dragged her to the gate and proceeded to open it with the intention of pushing her out. The tears were running down her cheeks in torrents. She cried: 'Have you no sense of shame? Must you so far forget yourself? . . . Being your wife, you think I must put up with your cuffs and kicks? For heaven's sake, behave yourself, and shut the gate. Let us not be found making scenes like these!' "

This incident is narrated neither to amuse the reader nor to tarnish the name of an exceptional being; it is mentioned merely to show that a saint in the making is difficult to live with.

There is no doubt that Mr. Gandhi was in some ways a bully. His wife and children feared him. They never knew what would offend him, and so they were always on the defensive in his presence. He had, without knowing it, destroyed their spontaneity. Devadas, his youngest son, once said in a reminiscent mood to a few intimate friends, "I revered my father, but I could never love him." Asked to explain himself, he remarked, choosing each word with care: "You see, it requires no special powers to know that he is miles ahead of other men, but so far as we, his children, are concerned, he might never have been. He gave us no tenderness, only lectures on being good and true. Personally, I am tired, very, very tired, of being a figure on a stained-glass window; I want to be myself. I think Father made the same mistake that Jesus did—that all men were born to sacrifice themselves for others. If that is so, who is to live?"

Mr. Gandhi may have secured freedom for India and given the world a new ethic, but, one by one, he lost his children. That was a part of his personal tragedy.

By his behavior he almost alienated the feelings of Kasturbai too, but she was of heroic mold, one who understood how

to wear away, slowly and softly, his angularities. She knew instinctively the great art of stooping to conquer. This does not mean that she always submitted her will to his own, for she did not; but she so behaved that sooner or later he became ashamed of his own conduct. Gradually, as the years passed, he acquired genuine respect for her natural good sense. If it is permissible to use such a comparison, she was to him, at all times, what Sancho Panza was to Don Quixote. She brought him down to earth, when his tendency was to float away in pursuit of some imagined or imaginary perfection.

Mr. Gandhi early saw that, if he was to achieve the great aims he had in view, he had to sacrifice much that other men prized or clung to. He put all his wealth and earnings at the service of his community and country. He had taken out a life-insurance policy for about $3,500 before leaving India; now he deliberately let it lapse. Whenever anyone asked him about his plans for providing for his wife and children, he would smile and say, with dead earnestness, "After all, the real protector is not myself but the Almighty." He had read the Christian gospels and the Hindu religious masterpieces to good purpose: from the former he had learned that the lilies of the field toil not, but that the Lord provides for them; from the latter he had imbibed the principle of *Aparigraha,* or nonpossession. Tolstoy had contributed his tithe to this frame of mind. With Mr. Gandhi, an idea or ideal never remained merely an intellectual or emotional acquisition. When he accepted it, it became a part of his daily life. Now he had decided not to be burdened with worldly goods. His soul had no need of impedimenta.

This great change came over him near the close of 1898, when he was twenty-nine years old. When a spiritual crisis occurred in the life of Tolstoy, he was over fifty and had already drunk the cup of life to its dregs; Mr. Gandhi, un-

like the Russian master, was still a young man and had known little of earthly ecstasy when he renounced what most mortals struggle to hold. Blake said, "The way to moderation lies through excess." Mr. Gandhi did not know this; indeed, if it had been pointed out to him he would have laughed. He did not even believe in moderation; he simply put certain things out of his life. It was as though he had deeply pondered the words of Jesus: "If thy hand offend thee . . ."

But Mr. Gandhi at this time had been immersing himself in religious writings. As we have already noted, he had read the *Bhagavad-Gita* in England; now he began to study, line by line, that Indian book of books. It convinced him of the superiority of the soul over the body, of spirit over matter. It also confirmed him in his inclination not to cling to earthly possessions. He absorbed the books of Vivekananda, that practical mystic, and found that they infused into him a mood of virile submissiveness. He meditated on the Yoga Sutras, which crystallize, in fiery particles, the spiritual athleticism of Hindu India. These magical utterances, each requiring aeons of thought, tell the neophyte how to attain liberation in the total sense here and now. There has to be, to begin with, a shedding of accretions before the psyche can emerge from its chrysalis state and envision the glory that pervades the universe.

A hurricane passed over the spirit of Mr. Gandhi when he brooded over the words of this ageless Indian inquiry into the unknown. He was never the same again; true, he went about his everyday tasks with his usual intensity, but he kept hearing in the deep core of his self a small voice, saying, "Nothing brings all things."

Mr. Gandhi formed a Seekers' Club where he and like-minded individuals read and discussed time-honored books. He was in some ways like Emerson: when a new book was

published, he went to an old one. He was one of those who believed that there could be no ownership in spiritual things, which, like Shakespeare's gentle rain, were meant for all, blessing him who gave and him who received. Indeed, sharing them was to supply them with wings.

Mr. Gandhi, while contemplating the condition of his soul, reviewed the needs of the body. Food could defile. Reform was called for here. Spices were at once rejected; salt followed suit; out went grease, even in the shape of ghee (clarified butter); boiling and broiling had its brief hour and then gave place to lightly cooked or utterly uncooked meals. Sometimes fruit was all that was to be found on the table.

How Kasturbai relished the kitchen-craftsmanship of her husband remains, alas, unrecorded; but we can, without much stretch of the imagination, picture her, at lunch or dinner, sniffing the air contemptuously. Often, it is said, she rose from the table quite famished, though as usual she gave no sign of this. She would, when her husband was no longer there, go into the kitchen, get unleavened bread and a jar of pickle, and eat, saying to herself that she was tasting some delicacy that she fancied at the moment. Many an imaginary repast she enjoyed, though, after a while, she would feel hungrier than ever. Then her nose would lead her toward the door of her neighbor, whence issued the tempting odors of curry and rice. She would stand there long, inhaling the aroma that reminded her of days that were no more. At last, sighing, she would return indoors, and smile as though nothing had happened.

Mr. Gandhi had not the least idea that he was tormenting his wife and children; he thought, in the purity of his heart and mind, that he was acting for the best, giving everyone healthful victuals. He had discovered the tremendous truth, or so at least he thought, that "passion in man is generally

coexistent with hankering after the pleasure of the palate." His gustatory inclinations had to be subjugated. He was groping toward a peculiar kind of transubstantiation; he imagined that the simpler the fare, the less contaminated one would be. This effort must have been for him quite a trial, because he had been, since boyhood, a heavy eater, one who enjoyed every morsel of what was put before him. But was not the spirit stronger than the flesh? Substance was what did not subsist. Mr. Gandhi supplied his body with what the then reigning school of nature cure prescribed. Often, it is said, he chewed his food very slowly, as though he were savoring every bite, but to those who had sharp eyes it seemed that there was a frown on his face that deepened as the meal progressed. But he carried on stoically; he had created for himself a culinary Rubicon and he had to cross it.

In course of time he came to enjoy almost anything that he ate. Later, when in jail, he appreciated practically everything that was given to him. He was a model prisoner, one who never complained. All was manna to him.

But to come to another experiment of Mr. Gandhi's: He now swore by earth and water, which, he held, could cure most of the illnesses that afflicted mankind. He threw away whatever medicine bottles he possessed, and forbade the use of drugs in his house. If a child had a headache, water treatment was given to him; if he had a bellyache, again he had to go on water; in a word, in Mr. Gandhi's house, water always flowed. The taps were never silent. Of course, mud and mud packs were not far behind; they were to be seen in their pristine purity, here, there, everywhere. An English friend, visiting Mr. Gandhi's home on some serious business, remarked, when questioned how he had fared with his host: "I saw with my own eyes the birth of chaos. This Mr. Gandhi is bent on reducing everything to water and mud. I'm afraid

he will succeed. To reduce the complicated is to destroy it. The living cannot go back; only ghosts can do that. Mr. Gandhi is trying to fill the world with the shades of shadows."

Mr. Gandhi did not care what others thought of him and his healing art; the test lay in actual results. He cured many an ailment by his method. Once, while playing, his son Ramdas broke his arm and was in great pain. Mr. Gandhi spoke to the boy in soothing words and gave him the benefit of his knowledge: he applied a mud poultice to the broken limb. It remained in place for a month, the broken arm causing, in the beginning, much suffering to the lad. However, when the poultice was removed, the limb was found to be perfectly all right.

Everyone was surprised. Mr. Gandhi's fame as a physician began to spread, much to his confusion. He had now to act as doctor to all and sundry. He took his new role as a part of his *karma*, or moral duty, but soon he began to like it. He developed an unsurpassed bedside manner; his very presence seemed to make people feel better. Various ashramites, when questioned about Mr. Gandhi's attitude when sick, all replied: "He was the gentlest of nurses. He seemed to take on himself a part of your suffering. Some of us were glad when indisposition overtook us; then we basked in the warmth of his tenderness."

One day Mr. Gandhi returned home to find his wife suffering from hemorrhage. This time, much against his will, he sent her to a nursing home, where she was operated upon. The diet to which she was accustomed, and to which she strictly adhered, would not let her regain her strength. The doctor intervened, and insisted on giving her beef tea. Both husband and wife objected. The man in charge asked that the patient be removed from the hospital because he did not want her to die while under his roof and in his care. Mr. Gandhi was not perturbed in the least; he took Kasturbai

back home and began giving her his famous natural-cure treatment. For a while all seemed lost; the sick woman became weaker and weaker. The doctors frowned on Mr. Gandhi's methods, and said that he was persevering in folly, and endangering his mate's life. Kasturbai, however, had boundless faith in her husband's skill. She did exactly as he told her. He scarcely left her bedside, giving her every care and praying for her. The only "medicine" he supplied was lemon juice and water. Strangely enough, she recovered on this meager regimen. When she was out of danger, he gave her fruit and milk. Soon she was well, and moved about as though she had never been in the jaws of death.

Mr. Gandhi had not been quite sure of the virtues of lemon juice when he administered it to his wife, but, mercifully, it proved successful. He was a great believer in what Americans call hunches. But what a risk he had taken! No one except a saint or a charlatan could so risk a precious existence. But when an idea came to Mr. Gandhi, he followed it to the bitter end. If the means were sound, he seemed to think, the ends could not be disastrous. Unconventional, he was "common-sensical" in an uncommon way; he always tried to think and feel anew.

Kasturbai's recovery amazed medical opinion in Johannesburg. This was not a confirmation of Mr. Gandhi's unscientific, even absurd, theories. Kasturbai's recovery was a clear case of mental healing.

It may be pointed out here that before going to England to qualify himself for the Bar he had entertained seriously the idea of being a physician. Though he had pursued it no further, he always had a deep interest in healing. Indeed, he never feared disease. He would nurse, in South Africa as in India, people suffering from dangerous or loathsome ailments. He housed lepers, cleaned their horrifying sores, and fed them with his own hands. Plague and cholera did not

terrify him; victims of such maladies were tended by him with loving attention. The more desperate a man's condition, the more Mr. Gandhi's heart went out to him.

If you were healthy and happy, Mr. Gandhi had no use for you; he would look at you, his face would pucker impishly, and he would dismiss you without a second thought. If you were ill, he would cover you, as it were, with the warmth of his affection. This became so well known that healthy people avoided Mr. Gandhi because he made them feel uncomfortable in his presence. He was in his true element among the afflicted. He loved to help, to heal, to comfort. He had to save someone, no matter whom. He derived happiness from alleviating the unhappiness of others. Then the best in him came out. In this, he was different from Jesus, who freely gave health and spiritual sustenance to those that needed it, but who also enjoyed such a tribute as that of Mary when she anointed his feet with a precious ointment. Gandhi was lopsided; he found his Elysium in sorrow and in sorrowing men.

In 1906 Mr. Gandhi founded his Phoenix Colony, three hundred miles from Johannesburg, where he carried on his experiment of leading a life of the utmost simplicity. This idea came to him after reading Ruskin's *Unto This Last*, which made so profound an impression upon him that within forty-eight hours of finishing it he decided to put into practice the theories of the author. Mr. Gandhi, unlike many of his countrymen, was an activist; he was always eager to *do* something. Inaction, unless deliberately chosen as a matter of tactics, was to him not only a crime but a folly. He knew, better than most, the central teaching of the *Bhagavad-Gita*—that activity was the *raison d'être* of the universe. It is amusing to reflect that at a time when Russia was enjoying the word *Oblomovism*, or indifference to life, a smiling Oriental, a Hindu from the shadowy land of

incense-breathing India, was showing the world, from his little corner in South Africa, that vast problems and cloudy theories were meaningless, and that the essential thing was some good, however small, performed in a concrete way. Here was the first case of an Indian who was more Western than most Westerners. Probably Mr. Gandhi was born with what Maurice Maeterlinck would have called "the Occidental lobe" in him. But perhaps we have not gone far enough; the fact is that Westernism is Indianism with the sign changed. When a Hindu is true to himself and true to the larger teachings of his race, he finds nothing alien in the European or American experiment with life when it is shorn of its false trappings and meaningless sound and fury.

Mr. Gandhi settled down on his new property with some European friends and led the life about which Ruskin had written but not lived. He proved the truth of the words "Right you are, if you think you are."

He conducted the farm on a communal basis: everyone had to give a helping hand. He himself worked in the kitchen, ground corn, and turned the wheel in printing his weekly *Indian Opinion*. He not only toiled cheerfully but, what was more, made the tasks of others light and happy. Though he could not tolerate slackness, and everything had to be done efficiently, he made his will known not by words but by example. Whatever he did, however unimportant, he put his heart into it. One of his old colleagues, now a Cabinet minister, speaking of this trait, remarked laughingly, "He had an almost Teutonic thoroughness."

If Mr. Gandhi had to tie a parcel he would do it as well as any well trained girl in a department store. Seeing him at these trivial chores, we recall the famous words of Colette: "Fait avec amour." He would also, being a *bania*, a member of a very thrifty caste, hoard up bits of string, scraps of paper, old envelopes, newspapers, empty tins, in fact, almost

anything we would throw out. To enter his treasury was to be in a paradise of useful nullities: threads of various kinds, reels, cardboard boxes, apart from the articles we have already mentioned, would lie neatly in equidistant rows. Waste, of any kind, shocked him. He knew, like the Chinese philosopher, the use of useless things.

Mr. Gandhi laundered and ironed his clothes himself. One day he starched his collars too much. Not knowing that he had done so, he appeared in court. The heat melted the stuff, which trickled down his neck and onto his black robe. He felt as though his shirtband had been glued to him, but he could do nothing to relieve his misery because at the moment he was pleading before the magistrate. That very morning he had also cut his own hair, and in a manner that would have shocked any self-respecting barber. When he came into the courtroom his colleagues laughingly asked him if, out of the goodness of his heart, he had allowed his head to be nibbled at by rats. Learning to do everything for himself was a difficult business.

Ahimsa—reverence for life—was one of the cardinal principles practiced at Phoenix. Mr. Gandhi would not allow the meanest insect or the deadliest cobra to be destroyed. Often, the faith of those that lived on the farm was sorely tried; if they saw a snake, they had to leave it alone, knowing full well that its presence boded no good; if they espied a wild beast, they allowed it to roam at will. They could do nothing in the presence of such dangers but keep a stiff upper lip, and pray.

One lovely afternoon, while Mr. Gandhi was reclining under a tree, an enormous mamba dragged its cold length over his legs. Without moving a muscle, he sat watching the snake's progress. The European members of the little community beheld the scene with bated breath, fearful that

the end of the eccentric but beloved leader was at hand. But the dreaded serpent flowed harmlessly up the tree.

"My God, what a chance you took!" said one of the onlookers.

"You do tempt Providence, don't you, Mr. Gandhi?" put in another voice, with a touch of hysteria in it; and others joined in expressing similar or stronger fears.

Mr. Gandhi had a very sharp sense of the dramatic. He rose, smiling, and said: "Why be of so little faith? Didn't Jesus say that not a sparrow falls without God's knowledge?"

There is in all great men an element of the actor; they know what will move their hearers. Whether they actually believe all that they say is one of those things that had better be left to the judgment of the Deity. It seems that a successful genius cannot do without an element of charlatanism. Mr. Gandhi may have belonged from the beginning to the choir of heaven, but he knew very well where the furniture of earth lay.

On Mr. Gandhi's farm were several boys and girls who had to be given proper training. He himself believed in coeducation, saying that the two sexes must get to know each other as early as possible, so that they could grow up to be comrades and fellow workers in a common cause. He put particular stress on the building of character, which, according to him, was fate in the larger sense. But it is best to quote his own words: "If the foundation is firmly laid . . . the children can learn all the other things themselves, or with the assistance of friends."

He adored children, and would have liked to spend most of his time with them; but this was impossible, for his duties and obligations were manifold. Mrs. Polak and his other followers had to assume this part of his work. Often they were in a quandary when problems connected with their

charges arose. To make matters more difficult, corporal punishment was taboo. One of the boys on the farm was both cruel and deceitful. The other teachers gave him up in disgust as irreclaimable. Mr. Gandhi took him in hand, and bestowed extraordinary care and affection on him, believing that love would overcome all obstacles. It was, however, a vain hope. The teen-aged boy delighted in torturing those that were weaker than he was. Finally, the boy knocked down a little girl, and sat on her chest until she nearly choked. This was too much, even for Mr. Gandhi. He asked Mr. Polak to thrash the boy soundly. Mr. Gandhi was bitterly disappointed that brute force had to be employed, but he saw no alternative. Nevertheless, his conviction in the regenerating power of pure affection remained unshaken. There was always an exception to a rule.

Sometimes he had to deal with grave sex offenses committed by the young living under his roof. He was, as we have seen, the paterfamilias of a huge household. Whenever a boy or girl misbehaved, he blamed himself for it, and punished himself by fasting. Once, while in Johannesburg, he received news of the moral fall of two members of the settlement. He was deeply grieved, for the girl in question had made a good impression upon him, and he had not expected her to err in such a manner. He immediately came back and looked into the whole affair. He felt that, at least to some extent, he and the other teachers were responsible for the lapse; they had not trained the girl well enough. After taking measures to correct the guilty couple, he imposed on himself a fast of seven days. "My penance," he says, "pained everybody, but it cleared the atmosphere. Everyone came to realize what a terrible thing it was to be sinful and the bond that bound me to the boys and girls became stronger and truer."

Mr. Gandhi was, and always remained, a visionary, but

somehow what seemed absurd to others worked miraculously well for him. His was the logic of Tertullian: *Credo quia impossibile.* For him, a thing was possible because it appeared impossible. He knew that it was generally the unbelievable that happened.

Recording his impressions of the Phoenix Farm, the Indian ashram in the heart of South Africa, C. F. Andrews says: "If the first note was simplicity, the second was universal brotherhood. For mere distinctions of creed, race and color had been resolved in a higher synthesis which was wonderful to witness. It was not only that the Indian coolie in distress found here a home and a welcome, and the poor sickly Indian children from the town of whatever rank nursed back to health, but here also the Zulu and the Kaffir were received with love and tenderness. No one was servant in Mr. Gandhi's household, or rather all were servants of one another." There were in the colony some Europeans; these led the same kind of existence as the others, and, according to our chronicler, added "one more touch to the fullness of the human brotherhood. Religion also gave its own variety without interrupting the harmony of the whole."

The same lofty ideals were adhered to when Mr. Gandhi founded Tolstoy Farm some years later. He wanted to honor the Russian master whose writings, particularly on religious subjects, had influenced him so much. Indeed, he had carried on some correspondence with the great writer, but this is, in itself, of no intrinsic importance. The author of *War and Peace,* who had turned to creating moral fables and stories for children, wished his distant Hindu admirer good luck in his endeavors and went on dreaming of a Chimera that would wrest the secret from the brooding Sphinx.

A young Muslim boy had been sent to the Phoenix Farm in a dying condition. He was nursed back to health, and soon became the favorite of everyone. He loved Mr. Gandhi, and

would nestle at his side, looking up into his face, and chatter to him of all the doings of the day. Mr. Gandhi would listen to him as though matters of far-reaching consequence depended upon what he was hearing. This absorption in another's problems was one of his most lovable characteristics. It made people easy in his presence; they knew that they could unburden themselves without fear.

Of Mr. Gandhi's political struggle not much has been said so far; it is now a matter of past history, a history that remains even today malodorous. It is sufficient to say that he took part, along with many of his compatriots, in the Boer War, in the Zulu suppression, and in getting from the South African authorities whatever concessions he could manage. He was at this time a reformer, a constitutionalist, a friend of the British Empire, and a man whom no one could call a revolutionary or an anarchist. He was a lover of his kind who wanted peace and prosperity for everyone, whether black, brown, or white. He had no hatred for anyone. Like the Buddha, he was trying to fill the four corners of the world with his love. He had but one instrument against evil: *Satyagraha,* soul force. This weapon he had forged in the crucible of South Africa, and, as events were to prove, it was invincible. It cut through the barbed wire and bastions of imperialism like a scythe mowing grass.

V

RETURN OF THE NATIVE

MR. GANDHI had known no rest in South Africa; his days had been so full of work and worry that often he looked utterly exhausted. His body, ever frail, presented an emaciated appearance. To a stranger, who did not trouble to look into his eyes, he was no more than another starving coolie. Although Mr. Gandhi took great care of his person, and was as neat as a new pin, there was in him an awkwardness of dress that he could never overcome. European clothes, particularly those tubes called trousers, seemed to constrict him. He walked stiffly, as though his pants irked him, and his shoes, whatever type he had, pinched his broad toes. Even the traditional turban, which everyone knows how to wear at a rakish angle, sat on his head primly, like a flat dish dropped in an accident by some negligent god. If ever there was an unfashionable Indian, it was certainly Mr. Gandhi. He was a standing example of sartorial inefficiency.

His face impressed no one; it seemed to have been molded by the Divine Potter in a desperate hurry. His hair was dark but stiff and unruly, always standing up like the quills of a fretful porcupine; his nose was long and pendulous, resembling a door handle; and his ears stood out like the

miniature fans affected by Chinese beauties. His mouth was wide, displaying teeth that were already beginning to cause him trouble, and his chin was as firm as a boxer's fist. His coloring was peculiar, neither black nor dark brown, but bright as a copper pot. He seemed to have been made for the delight of caricaturists. Only when he spoke, or when you looked at him, did he seem different from other men.

Mr. Gandhi approached everything with a concern that was almost passionately disinterested. His words, simple as they were, seemed to issue not from the surface of his mind, as with most of us, but from his depths. To know him, even for a while, was to appreciate him, and appreciation is the Siamese twin of affection.

Almost everyone in the Indian community in South Africa liked Mr. Gandhi, and even those on whose toes he trod, for one reason or another, respected him. However odd his ways, he was utterly free from the taint of selfhood. The good of others, especially of the outcasts of society, was his main concern. Even the Europeans conceded that Mr. Gandhi was a friend of the underdog and that he never went out of his way to annoy the "overdog." They could not, even when most opposed to him, help having a sneaking admiration for him. General Smuts is reported to have said to H. N. Brailsford, speaking of Mr. Gandhi: "I knew that Caliban had been let loose in the world, but he spoke and behaved better than Ariel."

Mr. Gandhi's presence in South Africa, after twenty-one years, was now no longer absolutely necessary. He saw that younger men, having qualified for the bar, were arriving in the country, ready to take up where he might leave off. And then occasionally, perhaps at rare intervals, homesickness came upon him. True, in sober moments, he dreaded going back to India, for he had been absent from the country for many years, and some of the ties that were dear to him had

been snapped by the hand of death. Still, he could feel at times, at least in memory, his home town's native air, which, in the cool of the evening, seemed to come as though filtered through scented gauze. He heard, too, the lapping of the little waves as they kissed India's sands. He realized that his work in the country of his adoption was over. He could do no more. He must go back to the home of endless problems. He could not remain idle there, for some task was bound to come his way. He was now, at forty-five years of age, no longer a timid young man who stammered and stuttered in the presence of any petty magistrate or judge; he was in the fullness of his powers, and quite sure of himself.

Mr. Gandhi told the Indian community of his desire to return to the land of his forefathers. No one liked the idea, but, because he was adamant, they gave in. The farewell party brought tears to the eyes of many. The Indians of South Africa were losing their friend and mentor. But, though they would be orphaned without him, they understood his point of view, and respected it.

Mr. Gandhi found it difficult to complete his parting speech. Every now and again he brought out his large handkerchief. "I do not know how to express my words of farewell," he said. "The best years of my life have been passed in South Africa." He paused, shaking with emotion; it was hard to leave those with whom his fate had been linked so long. He said that he was not forsaking them for ease and comfort. Indeed, he was returning to a country that had become strange to him; he knew that it would take some time to adapt himself to it and its ways. He spoke of his European friends, saying that they had helped him "through thick and thin," and that leaving them behind was for him "a heavy blow," but that he had no option in the matter. "I can only say farewell and ask them to give me their blessings."

The scene was memorable. Not a man present—European or Oriental—masked his grief. All were sorry that something was going out of their lives that would never return again. Each one, as he rose, murmured, "God bless you."

Mr. Gandhi was deeply moved. In later years, when burden upon burden fell on his meager shoulders, he thought of his last day in South Africa, and then before him rose, out of the shadows, eager faces and smiling glances that were, for him, scattered torches in the enveloping night.

It was now 1914, but there was as yet no talk of Armageddon. The voyage was quiet and peaceful, Mr. Gandhi giving himself up to lying luxuriously on the upper deck. For once, in a long while, he was getting some rest. He was going on to England before returning home. Before he reached Madeira, however, war clouds had gathered ominously on the horizon. Mr. Gandhi, the future apostle of peace, reached London on August 6, 1914, exactly forty-eight hours after the blaze had begun in Europe.

He did not loiter, nor did he spend his time in visiting friends or picture galleries. He immediately set about raising, among the Indian community, a corps of volunteers; he was, as usual, an ally of the British Empire; it was his duty to render it every possible service.

Unfortunately, he was laid up with an attack of pleurisy, and could do no war work. A friend of his, Dr. Jivraj Mehta, looked after him. His self-imposed obligations were attended to by one of his admirers, Mr. Sorabji, a Parsee youth from South Africa.

The English climate was not at its best then. It rained a great deal, and a cold wind blew that seemed to penetrate the very marrow of one's bones. Mr. Gandhi, not well fleshed by nature, suffered from the rigors of the unpredictable

weather. Even when morning came, the air was cold and misty. But the sun was strangely beautiful, like an orange lying on a silver plate. Mr. Gandhi had no eyes for the dance of Samsara, the shining cloak of Divinity. He was recovering slowly, and he was worried that he was not doing his best for the war effort.

A few months later, when he was better, he threw himself into frenzied activity. About this time he met someone who was to play a heroic part in the Indian struggle for independence. But the first impression he produced on her was disastrous. Sarojini Naidu, then a young poet, intoxicated with success, laughed outright when she saw him in his modest quarters at Kensington. There, in front of her, on the wooden floor sat a small man, with shaven head and jowls, wrapped in a blanket, and absurdly resembling a toad. This creature, whose ears seemed to be too large for his face, was dipping his fingers in a wooden bowl containing uncooked tomatoes floating in olive oil. He was enjoying his meal thoroughly. Mr. Gandhi was not put out by her irreverent hilarity. Calmly, very politely, he asked her to share his repast with him. She, dainty and fastidious, brought up in a refined home, where delicious food was served in delightful surroundings, recoiled. Her host, capable of seeing the merest twinkle in a person's eyes, smiled indulgently and went on talking as though she were one of his greatest admirers. Partly amused, partly bewitched, Sarojini fell under his spell. Later, giving up a glorious career, she was to join him as a follower and go through many trials and tribulations for his sake.

While in London, Mr. Gandhi influenced several other people, English and Indian. A Hindu businessman who saw him at the time says, "He was the ugliest man I had ever come across, but he seemed to be, in his words and ways,

the India of our peasantry." After thinking a little, the same man added, "In his face I saw the image of our starving millions."

As Mr. Gandhi was known to be a supporter of the British Empire, he was advised by his English friends to return to India, where he could be of greater use in the war effort. He, a loyal subject of the Crown, and a believer in the righteous cause of England, immediately booked his passage and set sail for his homeland, which he reached at the beginning of 1915. He landed in Bombay, swearing fidelity to his overlords.

What was it that bound him to the expanding acquisitions of his masters? Let him speak for himself: "I admire the British Constitution; tear it to shreds and my loyalty also will be torn to shreds. Keep it intact, and they hold me bound a slave to that Constitution."

In this spirit Mr. Gandhi began his public life in India. He was the greatest friend that Britain ever acquired. Oddly, only five years after his return, his faith was to receive a rude shock.

At the moment Mr. Gandhi was the best recruiting sergeant of the British in India. He went about from place to place, singing the praises of the Allies. Germany was the aggressor, he said, and she must be put down. It was the duty of Indians to help Britain.

Some Hindu and Muslim politicians, who knew what the war in Europe was about, were amused by Mr. Gandhi's antics; they did not take him seriously. After all, who was he? True, they had heard of him as a valiant fighter for the Indian cause in South Africa, but that was a faraway place where lived mostly their coolie countrymen.

An Indian politician, now fairly high in the hierarchy that rules the country, was aghast when he encountered Mr. Gandhi. Before him, he said to me, stood a small dark man

with a queer turban and coat, lean, lanky, with ill-shaped feet thrust into worn-out sandals. "Ho, ho!" he exclaimed. "This is the man of whom we have heard that he is as strong as steel! Why, though no Hercules myself, I can knock him down with one blow. He is as humble as any peasant in the countryside. I'm sure he would stand in the gutter if I asked him to."

Quite a few, seeing Mr. Gandhi, thought likewise. Very soon, however, they had to swallow their words; this small man, seemingly so mild, was as firm as the Himalayas. But Mr. Gandhi's hour had not yet come. He was still a minor personality in his own country. There were others who counted for much more, men like Tilak and Gokhale. Mr. Gandhi knew how to wait, however. He kept himself in the background. He would be called by his country. He was sure of that. The star of love that the Magi had seen and worshiped beckoned him on.

Mr. Gandhi had hoped to work in India under the leadership of Gopal Gokhale, his political mentor, whom he had met and come to admire during the latter's flying visit to South Africa. But this was not to be. Mr. Gokhale was an ailing man at the time, and, to the sorrow of many, soon died. Gokhale's place was difficult to fill, for he was at once scholar and patriot, and a man capable of seeing two sides of a question.

Mr. Gandhi revered the memory of the elder statesman of his country, and wished to join his Servants of India Society; but his nomination, even as an associate member, was frowned upon by those who ran the organization. Actually, these men were afraid of Mr. Gandhi; his views and theirs differed fundamentally. They were only too happy to move from petition to petition. He was a rebel, and there was no place for him in the organization. Mr. Gandhi went

away, crestfallen. However, he had been pursued by the thought of creating a quiet retreat where he and people of similar views might live together in an ideal community. He spoke of this half-dream, half-wish to some influential friends. They did not laugh at him; indeed, they persuaded some wealthy persons of Ahmedabad to lend him their support. After all, thought the great merchants, Mr. Gandhi was one of them, and a man who had raised the prestige of their race abroad. They gave him the necessary funds. So, in 1915, on the 25th of May, when a fratricidal conflict of the most fearful kind was raging in Europe, was founded the Satyagrahashram, or the Abode of Soul Force.

Whoever joined it had to abide by the following rules:

1. Vow of truth
2. Vow of ahimsa (nonviolence)
3. Vow of celibacy
4. Vow of control over the palate
5. Vow of nonthieving
6. Vow of nonpossession
7. Vow of Swadeshi (homemade goods)
8. Vow of fearlessness
9. Vow of regarding Untouchables as equals
10. Vow of manual labor
11. Vow of hand spinning and hand weaving

It is not enough, Mr. Gandhi elaborated in his inimitable manner, that one ordinarily does not resort to untruth. One ought to know that no deception may be practiced, even for the good of the country, and that truth may require opposition to one's parents and elders. It is not sufficient to refrain from taking the life of any living creature: the honest follower of nonviolence may not hurt even those whom he believes to be cruel or unjust. He may not even be angry with them; he must love them. The tyrant, at home, in society, or in the government, must be opposed unflinchingly,

even unto death, but he must not be harmed in any way. He must be changed by true affection.

According to Mr. Gandhi, it is almost impossible to observe the above two vows unless celibacy is also accepted. It is a little thing if one does not look upon a woman with a lustful eye; the essential is to control one's animal passions so that these will not be stirred even in thought. If one is married, one must not behold one's wife carnally, but must consider her as a lifelong friend, and establish with her a relationship of perfect brotherliness.

Unless one has mastered the pleasures of the palate, the other "don't's" will not function properly. Exciting food and sexual continence go ill together. He who desires to serve his country must believe that eating is necessary only for sustaining the body; he will, by slow steps, so regulate and purify his diet that the passionate side in him will not be awakened.

It is a minor matter not to steal what belongs to another; the crime is to use articles that we do not really require. Nature provides us enough for our daily needs, but nothing for our greed.

Not to accumulate riches is no virtue; he who wishes to advance on the true road of life must keep no more than what is essential for his everyday wants. Thus, if one can do without a feather bed or a mink coat or a concert piano, not to speak of a Rolls-Royce, one must do so. What is wrong with a loincloth, a bullock cart, or that musical horror known as the harmonium, which Germany, in a moment of artistic aberration, gave to India for its musical confusion? Simplify even simplicity.

The use of indigenous articles must be encouraged because what is produced in the West or in the mills at home is, to some extent, soaked in the blood, sweat, and tears of many helpless and hapless workers. The results of exploitation,

however seeming fair, are poison to the lover of truth. And, politeness apart, why beautify the body artificially? This is a real hindrance to brahmacharya, or continence. Foreign styles, foreign cloths, foreign adornments, including even buttons, hooks, eyes, and zippers, must go. If Mr. Gandhi had remembered the famous seamless garment, he would certainly have advocated its use. For himself, as the whole world now knows, he devised a sort of homespun mantilla over a "Bikini."

He who is in the grip of fear cannot follow truth or non-violence. It is then the duty of those who manage the ashram to remain unafraid with their sole weapon of self-defense against their destroyers, be they kings in power or fierce animals in the jungle, the soul force.

Toiling, or manual labor, has long been considered, both in India and elsewhere, as something degrading. The mandarins in China and Indo-China allowed their fingernails to grow to enormous lengths, just to show that they never soiled their hands by doing lowly work. This eccentricity led to the downfall of those who indulged in it. Labor, particularly physical labor, is ennobling. The gospel of the hand grimed with toil, then, is something that no one should despise. It is what makes us true dwellers on the earth, where our mental and spiritual powers must be used for the greatest good of the greatest number of our kind. The animals are not to be excluded; it is for us to look after them, these weaker brethren of ours.

One of the chief causes of poverty in India, according to Mr. Gandhi, was the virtual disappearance of hand looms and spinning wheels. These must be restored to their original importance. The less a community depends on others for its well-being, the better; each village must suffice unto itself, and share its surplus with the more needy.

Mr. Gandhi gives no vows for politics because, to his

thinking, it is an art or science that cannot be separated from religion. The two are interlinked, like the obverse and reverse of a coin or medal. He observes in this connection: "Politics, economics, and so on and so forth, are not considered to be independent branches of learning, but as being all rooted in religion. An effort will be made to learn all these subjects in the spirit of undying belief in the divine."

Two classes of people continued to be accepted at the ashram: candidates and students. Though the former, even today, have to obey the various rules and regulations that are in force, they are allowed to take their time to subscribe to the necessary vows. The latter are taken in, whether male or female, from the age of four onward. Parents must relinquish all authority over their children, whom they may see again only at the end of the course. The pupils have to observe all the vows practiced by their elders and teachers. Subjects taught are: religion, literature, agriculture, spinning, and hand-loom weaving. Culture is imparted through such Indian languages as the youngsters know, and includes history, geography, mathematics, economics, and similar branches of learning. Sanskrit, Hindi, and at least one Dravidian tongue are obligatory. English is honored as a second language. Urdu, Bengali, Tamil, Telegu, and Dewanagri characters are made familiar to the students. Completion of the training takes ten years—not a negligible slice of one's life.

If discipline is strict, the diet at the ashram is at once simple and wholesome. Food is provided thrice a day, and consists of generous quantities of milk, vegetables, fruit, and nuts, as well as bread or rice. There are no fees for students or candidates, but their parents, guardians, or relatives are expected to contribute what they can toward the expenses of the ashram.

Manual labor is so honored at this institution that the inmates enthusiastically undertake work usually performed

by sweepers and scavengers. Everyone, whoever he or she might be, must clean the latrines once a week. When Mr. Gandhi was in the ashram, in its golden days, Kasturbai, who had been trained over a number of years, was made the supervisor-in-chief of this task. How she reacted to it we do not know with any exactitude; but one or two old congressmen, who watched her at the time, saw her covering her nose with three folds of her sari while keeping an eye on the others coming in and out, carrying the pails of ordure. As for Mr. Gandhi, if he happened to be present on these occasions, he gave a helping hand, or stood by with a beatific expression on his face. Somehow the stench was spiritualized for him, if such a thing is chemically or even alchemically possible. "Here," he must have said to himself, "go the future leaders of free India, from darkness into light. They must be like the lotus that, springing from slime, sends its glory into the air of heaven."

Men and women in the ashram have separate quarters, but they work together, pray together, and have their meals together. There is no restriction on the movements of anyone. Each is expected to be his or her own moral sentinel. When anyone falls from grace, which sometimes happens, as it happened at Phoenix, Mr. Gandhi, when he was there, had a long, quiet talk with the culprit, and then punished himself by fasting. But when a couple became deeply in love, despite the famous stricture of celibacy, he blessed them, and meditated on the injunction to "go and multiply."

What was at the back of all the vows and regulations that bristled at the ashram? Did Mr. Gandhi wish to turn India into a land of ascetics and recluses? Was renunciation, barren and unconstructive, the end of his endeavors? What did he wish to teach his followers by circumscribing their lives so rigidly? These and a host of other questions invade the mind of the inquirer, Oriental or Occidental. The English

were frankly puzzled when they found Mr. Gandhi advising them to take up voluntary poverty as a means of solving the vexed and vexatious problem of unemployment.

What this transvaluer of values had in mind was very simple. The inmates of the ashram, whatever their culture or qualifications, had to set an example to the whole country by identifying themselves in their everyday life with the toiling millions in fields and factories. Multiplication of wants, the way of the West, was ultimately wrong; the reduction of goods, the Eastern path, was what would lead to mankind's salvation.

Again, the country needed, and still needs, a band of devoted workers for organizing and leading the masses. "Swaraj is not for the cities," Mr. Gandhi has said, "but for the poor labourer and peasant." Unless the guides are trained in the simple habits of the common people, they cannot be one with them. They should, therefore, know how to plow the field, sow the seed, gather the harvest, and sell the produce. The competent ashramite has to master these various activities. Words are cheap; what actually impresses or influences is personal example.

Moral standards are not the same everywhere; they differ considerably from clime to clime, country to country. What is respectable in the West may not be so in the East. In Europe and America, as also in Russia, to kiss one's wife or sweetheart in the street or in a park is nothing very unusual; in Asia, however, it is considered to be vulgar and even obscene. Again, in the Occident a man's life is supposed to be his own business; he is judged by what he does when he comes out into the open. The story is quite otherwise in India. Whoever aspires to lead the people there must have a blameless life, so to speak, in the round. There is no distinction between public and private morality.

Bergson has said that the universe is a machine for produc-

ing gods. Mr. Gandhi was convinced that his ashrams, in Ahmedabad and elsewhere, were training grounds for spiritual athletes, not for winning the Ebor Handicap or the Derby, but for the service of the Motherland. Dedicated souls were needed, and he spared no effort to shape them. Some of his swans turned out to be mere geese, but by his constant care of them he induced them to grow a richer and thicker plumage than they would ordinarily have possessed.

But how did Mr. Gandhi himself live? His devoted secretary, Mahadev Desai, has given us a delightful picture of Sevagram, Mr. Gandhi's favorite ashram in Wardha. I draw from it freely because it is typical. The master never changed in fundamentals.

Mr. Gandhi inhabited a one-room hut made of mud and thatch. There was no furniture. Palm-leaf mats covered the floor. There was sometimes a stool meant for him or her who could not manage the art of sitting cross-legged. Here came everyone who had to consult Mr. Gandhi. Lord Lothian and Sir Stafford Cripps sat and discussed matters of moment in this humble abode. Indian leaders have been to Wardha many times.

Mr. Gandhi, as has been said, had a passion for collecting odds and ends. In his room, otherwise bare, were to be found nails and pins and discarded envelopes that might be useful at any time.

From early morn until night the little hut remained the scene of unceasing activity. At eleven o'clock it became a dining room, for Mr. Gandhi himself supervised the diet of his patients. He saw to it that every item on the menu was as it should be. An hour afterward, the hut became an office. Though Mr. Gandhi had no time for newspapers, he religiously read the "Thought for the Day" that appeared in the

Times of India. One reflection impressed him so much that he cut it out and hung it on the wall facing his seat: "When you are in the right, you can afford to keep your temper, and when you are in the wrong, you cannot afford to lose it." He gave this, for the benefit of his friends and disciples, the following twist: "When your opponent is in the wrong, you can afford to keep your temper, and when your opponent is in the right, you cannot afford to lose it."

When the mail had been scanned and important letters dictated, the hut became Mr. Gandhi's siesta room. Naturally, the others departed to follow his good example. Having had his brief rest, Mr. Gandhi gave interviews while lying on his back with a mud poultice on his abdomen. This was part of his permanent treatment for blood pressure—prescribed by himself. In the hot season he decorated his head with a mud bandage, telling his visitors, somewhat quizzically, that Mother Earth had wonderful properties of which people had little or on notion. "That is why," he would say, "instead of treading upon it, I have it on my head and on my abdomen."

Spinning absorbed him until he had spun a certain fixed number of yarns. Sometimes he was found engrossed in examining the details of the latest model of a charkha, and making suggestions to the designer.

At five o'clock in the evening the gong sounded for the final meal of the day, and the various patients foregathered in the hut, which had once again become a dining room. Here was to be found Dr. Rajendra Prasad, struggling to breathe because of his asthma, ready to discuss difficult problems, but often unable to do so.

Meals over, the hut was deserted. Everyone went out for a walk, including Mr. Gandhi, who found this hour the most relaxing because now he could chat and play with his grand-

children. People met once again in the hut for the day's last prayers, and then it became, along with the little veranda attached to it, a bedroom.

I have mentioned only a part of Mr. Gandhi's routine; he did many more things, such as inquiring about the kitchen, the crops, the newborn calf in the dairy, the tannery, the Village Industries Association, and so on.

Mr. Gandhi's most difficult task was doctoring. Those who suffered from physical ailments were easy enough to manage; the trouble began when he had to deal with cranks, faddists, and the emotionally or mentally disturbed. Somehow he seemed to draw to himself the maimed in life. He was ever gentle to them. Indeed, he often put aside important business to attend to them. Once he told a viceroy, after a long and inconclusive argument, that he wished to go back to Sevagram.

"But must you hurry off?"

"My heart is there. I have left a number of patients there. They are among the most valued of my co-workers, and I am happiest when with them."

Mr. Gandhi might have become a surgeon or physician had it not been for his objection to vivisection; but nursing remained his passion, and seemed to fill in him a spiritual want.

Mrs. Rehana Tyabji, writing in the magazine *Panchshila,* said that the various ashrams that Gandhi founded were, despite his best intentions, lunatic asylums. To them came human wrecks who took much of the master's time that could have been employed to better purposes. The tragedy was, this old disciple continues, that the life was such that even the sane became somewhat insane. Mr. Gandhi's regimen was not meant for all; it was too demanding.

That he himself had an inkling of this state of affairs is brought out by Mr. Gandhi in a semihumorous vein: "I have even likened it to a lunatic asylum—by no means an inap-

propriate comparison. Surely swaraj through the spinning-wheel can be the proposition only of a lunatic. But luckily lunatics are unaware of their lunacy. And so I regard myself as sane."

Sardar Patel dubbed the ashrams "menageries." He knew what he was saying. Though Mr. Gandhi set out to create homes for future heroes, he succeeded also in making invalids.

Mr. Gandhi read the gospels very carefully, and the following words made a profound impression upon him: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." He meditated on them, and found that they were not three aspects of reality, each with a mighty content of its own, but a prismatic trinity in a unity. One could not know only one of them, for that was nescience; but the true search of one led to the discovery of all. But where to start? How to begin the quest?

Here the Buddha came to the rescue; he had spoken of the "path." Yes, that was it, thought Mr. Gandhi. Once the right road had been discovered, everything else followed.

He recalled, too, the advice of his political mentor, Mr. Gokhale, who had told him in South Africa that he should not rush into politics when he returned home, but begin by studying the country and its people. He must travel, see, and then act. All truth, Patanjali has said, lies in the concrete. By knowing India and its problems, Mr. Gandhi fancied, he would get at the root of the sources of human unhappiness. Here, unconsciously, he was at one with Thomas Hardy, who once said: "If you want to see the best, first have a look at the worst."

Mr. Gandhi had already discarded his Western costume; he now went about in the simplest possible clothes. In fact, he looked like any peasant one meets in India. He had now become an eater of nuts. An Englishman who saw him at the

time says: "During the hour and a half that I was with Mr. Gandhi he did nothing but crack hard-shelled fruits while talking. Once or twice he paused to insert a particularly clean-looking kernel into his mouth and then went on masticating it with relish. I found this very odd, and, I am afraid, I smiled; but he was not in the least perturbed. He quietly passed on to me two or three nuts, hard as stone. I tried to break them with my teeth, but failed. Then he himself grinned, and his mouth seemed to run from ear to ear. 'Behold the mighty Englishman,' he said; 'he is six foot tall but the little nut defies him.' He looked at me, winked, and burst out laughing. As I am really very tall, I joined him in his hilarity. He had a subtle sense of humour, which could deflate without causing pain."

Mr. Gandhi toured India, going from place to place, traveling in a third-class carriage which in the good old days would have drawn a protest from an English pig or cow. He was pushed and pressed, but he did not mind; indeed he talked with the poor, peasants or workers, as though he belonged to their class. And they took him to be one of them, because he was barefoot and so strict that he dispensed even with cow's milk, saying that he would not take it until that sacred animal was better treated in India. This made a tremendous impression on his companions, and soon the word spread that a new saint, who talked a language that anyone could understand, had appeared in the land.

Mr. Gandhi, during his peregrinations, reached Haradwar during a great fair, which is held once every twelve years and is attended by millions of people, who dip in the holy waters of the Ganges, enjoy themselves, and believe that they have reserved for themselves a place in heaven. His presence caused a stir; here was a man who, like the great Sakyamuni, had given up everything for the good of others. Thousands came to have his darshana, that is, to have a peek

at him. India is a spiritual country where matter is ultimately what matters. A man who has given up riches and who lives like a mendicant must surely be holy. Is not the hardest way the best? Who treads the strait and narrow path except a messiah? Most men, in their naïveté, forget that all mortals are liable to error. Discrimination and rejection are not the same thing; a fool can be terribly honest. The fact is, giving up is as easy as pocketing too much; the difficulty lies in knowing where to draw the line between denial and acceptance. Mr. Gandhi quickly discovered that in thrice-holy India, the land of the Vedas, the quickest way to sanctification lay through renunciation. That he was ever experimenting with himself is true; that he was trying the values of certain foodstuffs is equally true; but that he had an eye on the Indian masses when indulging in an idiosyncrasy cannot be denied.

Already, driven by some obscure instinct, he was beginning to interweave policy and piety. He so refined his ulterior aims that he burned out of them all dross; he also so sharpened his goodness that it acquired a razor edge. He could, as we shall see later on, destroy while giving the appearance of infusing new life.

At the mela—that periodic spiritual orgy—Mr. Gandhi sat in a special shed erected for him. Thousands came to pay him their homage. Some just looked into his calm eyes and went away feeling better; some prayed at his feet and received from him a word that they cherished ever afterward; some took the dust from under his feet and rubbed it on their foreheads, thinking that they were now blessed. No one has told us how Mr. Gandhi reacted to these demonstrations; all that we know is that he had a capacity for laughing at himself and at others. He knew full well that he was not a savior of souls; he was a poor puzzled being, trying his best to be of help to those that needed it most. At night, when

alone, he must have wept at the folly of men. But one thing was clear: there were tremendous reserves of faith in the Indian multitudes. If these could be channeled in the right direction, not only all oppression might be swept aside with one stroke, but, what was far more important, a new dawn might be made to shed its light on the land. This was as yet a momentary gleam; it became a steady vision in time.

The years between 1915 and 1919 were important in the life of Mr. Gandhi. Then he obtained a true feel of the country. In his wanderings he had noticed the cruel apathy of officials, who seemed to think of nothing but personal ends; the people were to them so many numbers to be moved hither and thither. He was aware, at the same time, of the shortcomings of most Indians. "The woes of third-class passengers," he observes, "are undoubtedly due to the high-handedness of the railway authorities, but the rudeness, dirty habits, selfishness and ignorance of the passengers themselves are no less to blame.

While at the fair, Mr. Gandhi looked for sadhus, about whom he had heard so much; these men were said to be not only highly spiritual but possessed of extraordinary powers. He met quite a few of them, and was shocked. A sense of holiness, which according to him was the core of religion, was totally lacking. The holy men, whom thousands reverenced and showered gifts upon, were truly votaries of Mammon. He was disgusted. "The swarm of sadhus who had descended there," he says, "seem to have been born but to enjoy the good things of life." The masses, as ever, were gullible; but how great was their desire to be put in touch with the divine! The common people were truly wonderful; they were the heart and soul of India. The upper classes were just so many bubbles that rose and fell.

Some manifestations of sadhuism, or spiritual humbug, frightened him. He saw men torturing their bodies for the

delight of the incult mob. One man, almost naked, lay on a bed of spikes; another was standing with one foot tied to the branch of a tree; a third remained immersed in water from morn to eve, showing only his head; while others mortified themselves in different ways. All of them, Mr. Gandhi saw, had no serenity in their faces; obviously, they were playing to the gallery. To gain his ends, he said to himself, man is capable of affecting innumerable disguises. The self is the true master; it must be subdued, or reduced almost to zero.

Mr. Gandhi was, however, acutely aware of the pitfalls attendant on a blind pursuit of self. He recalled the following story about the Buddha from one of the sacred texts:

"The master had a young disciple whom he left in the desert, promising to return to him in three years to see how he had progressed. During this time the disciple built a house which he proudly showed the Buddha when he returned. The master examined it and then told the disciple to take the house to pieces and erect it again a few paces farther away, promising to return in another three years. The disciple did as he was instructed. The master returned, examined the house again, but told the young man that he must now abandon it altogether and sit by the river and meditate, promising to return again at the end of another three years. The disciple did as he was instructed. When the master had at last returned he asked the disciple what he had done with his time. 'I can now walk across, on the surface of the river, without getting my feet wet,' the young man boasted. 'Then you have wasted your time,' said the Buddha, 'for there is a ferry just around the corner."

These sadhus, reflected Mr. Gandhi, were like the disciple of Gautama, trying to achieve, with immense effort, what amounted to nothing. What energy foolish mortals spent to astonish one another! True progress consisted in surprising oneself, by becoming each day more and more pure.

Mr. Gandhi was taken to see Lakshman Jula, one of the loveliest spots that India possesses. Here the towering peaks of the Himalayas, covered with snow, silently look upon the calm and translucent waters of the Ganges. River and mountain carry on wordlessly an eternal colloquy. The scene is breath-taking in its beauty; silence pours down upon silence until there is a benediction in the very air that one breathes. One feels uplifted in these holy precincts, the temple of nature where the very trees, quiet sentinels on the banks, stand, like Wordsworth's nun, mute with adoration.

Mr. Gandhi was transfixed to the spot, and tears came to his eyes. So this was despised India, the land where the foreigner ruled and the sons of the soil groaned in misery! Why, here was glory enough for now and for all time. Indians had proved unworthy of their heritage; because they were weak and will-less, their souls were cramped. There must be an influx of new life; the old molds must be shattered. There and then Mr. Gandhi decided to simplify his life further. He did this for two reasons: because he wanted to do penance for the evil he had seen at the fair and because he knew that it was useless to try to change others without first changing oneself. He now ate only fruits, and took his evening meal before sunset.

While standing under the shadow of the Himalayas, and contemplating the blessed waters of the Ganges, Mr. Gandhi realized, as never before, the majesty and marvel of Nature. "I may even dispense with my room," he has written, "so that I may gaze out upon the starry heavens overhead, which stretch in an unending expanse of beauty. What conscious art of man can give me the scene that opens before me when I look up to the skies above with all their shining stars?" He adored the visible scheme, which was for him the splitting up of the One into the many. He did not quite understand or appreciate the wonder of man's creativeness. Where in the phenomenal world is to be found the Fifth Symphony of

Beethoven, the *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus, the *Sakuntala* of Kalidasa, the *Paradiso* of Dante, the lyrics of Hafiz or Shelley? There was no "Mona Lisa" before Leonardo or Caves of Ajanta before the Buddhist artists appeared on the scene. Spirit speaks best to the spirit of man. Is it a wild fancy to think that we human beings, imperfect as we are, may be the eyes through which the universe contemplates itself? Whatever we may say about the qualities of our lesser brethren the animals, no one has yet seen a cat meditating on the dialectics of Hegel, or listening in its quiet corner to the orisons of Pascal in the *Pensées*. That privilege is granted only to man.

Mr. Gandhi never understood that all true art was not only a form of life but one akin to prayer. Basically, for all his acumen, he was a sentimentalist; he admired the usual, the customary, the eminently "common-sensical," that which had been approved of from generation to genertation.

That was one side of him. He was, by and large, a conservative among conservatives. Ancestral experience he treated with huge respect, not quite knowing, as Disraeli has it, that most of us, when we reverence the past, merely perpetuate the errors of our forefathers. But, then, he was what he was; he could not stand on his own shoulders to gain a better view of the cosmos.

At Haradwar, where the people were finding their Saturnalia in religious mumbo jumbo, an incident occurred that gives us an insight into Mr. Gandhi's mind and the road he was already taking. A Hindu ascetic met him and drew him into a long discussion about the ego and the id. Finally he asked: "Why don't you wear the sacred thread, the sign of your caste? And where is your *shikha*?"—a small tuft of hair on the crown.

Mr. Gandhi was perplexed for a while; then, smiling, he admitted that, in principle, he was not against these distinguishing religious marks. In fact, they were necessary and

worthy of perpetuation. He promised to grow a tuft of suitable length on his close-cropped head; as for the thread round his neck, he would have nothing to do with it since a section of the Indian people, the Untouchables, were unable to wear it. He would assume only what was permitted to everyone.

Already, as we have seen, Mr. Gandhi had espoused the cause of the most neglected section of Indian society. Later, when he fought tooth and nail for the rights of the pariahs, he was accused by the British and even by some of his countrymen of indulging in political expediency, if not chicanery. What utter nonsense! In 1915 Mr. Gandhi had not the faintest notion that one day he would have to shoulder the terrific burden of leading an entire nation. At that time he was content to remain in the shade, a political backbencher, watching the Indian drama from a distance. As he himself put it, he lived "the peaceful life of a farmer and weaver, building the character of his pupils and doing such social service as lay nearest to his heart." He had not yet coined the blessed word "Harijan" (Child of God), which rings like a tocsin in the ears of certain Hindu priestly classes, but he was trying his utmost to identify himself with the lowliest of the low.

Mr. E. S. Montagu, Undersecretary of State for India, sitting in his office on the top floor of a huge building in Whitehall, and getting reports from the viceroy about conditions in the brightest dependency in the British Empire, smiled to himself and dismissed Mr. Gandhi from his mind as a "pure visionary." Then, with characteristic thoroughness, he jotted down in his diary: "He is a social reformer; he has a real desire to find grievances and to cure them, not for any reasons of self-advancement, but to improve the conditions of his fellow men."

So Mr. Gandhi seemed to the arbiters of the fate of his

country. But what was assumed to be a damp squib proved to be a time bomb of awesome power. But even many Indians among whom Mr. Gandhi lived and moved took him to be an ineffectual angel beating his wings in a void.

Who could awaken India, this living corpse that moved not? It stirred a little when prodded by a Buddha, a Krishna, or a Nanak, then remained more immobile than ever, filling the world with its vast snores.

VI

IN AND OUT OF JAIL

MR. GANDHI made his first public appearance in India at the annual Law Dinner in Madras in April, 1915. He made a speech that breathed fervent loyalty to the British Raj. He was, it appeared to all those who heard him, more royalist than the king. He extolled Britain and British ways extravagantly; there was in his words, for some rebellious spirits, a taint of oiliness. How could a slave so hug his chains?

Mr. Gandhi was sincere; when he believed a thing was right, nothing could move him from his position. Numbers did not terrify him; he could, if necessary, stand as a minority of one and be proud of it. He was fully aware that he would be misunderstood by some when he took up the side of Great Britain during the war, but he persisted in his course. He approved of the ultimate ideals of the alien power that ruled over his country. He was particularly enamored of the fact that "every subject of the British Empire had the freest scope for his energies and honour and whatever he thinks is due to his conscience." According to him, "that government is best which governs least." The British Empire afforded a superb example of this. Hence his loyalty to it.

Mr. Gandhi, it has been said, helped with recruitment for the armed forces, but the words he used during his many exhortations fall strangely on Indian ears today. He said, for instance, that "the gateway of India's freedom was on the French soil." Again, he advised his countrymen "to fight unconditionally unto death with Britain for victory." Mr. Gandhi was a sincere admirer of Britain and her experiment, and to admire what is admirable is a sign of intellectual maturity.

When the viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, called a war conference of princes and public men in India, in 1918, Mr. Gandhi received a special invitation to attend. He went and played his part gallantly, appealing to the public to help the Empire in every way. Returning home, after seeing the splendors of Delhi, he wrote to the representative of the king-emperor that he would try to make his compatriots "withdraw all Congress resolutions and not whisper 'Home Rule' or 'Responsible Government' during the pendancy of the war." He kept his word. He never thought, as other leaders did, that England's difficulty was India's opportunity.

Mr. Gandhi may or may not have read William James, but for him a belief was useless unless it could be put into practice. If what he believed in did not stand the test of reality, he discarded it, however much he cherished the conviction. Because he was fully convinced of the justice of British rule, he respected and even revered it. When he found it iniquitous, his reaction was violent. It was as though someone very dear to him had betrayed him.

His first quarrel with Britain took place in 1917 at Champaran, in Bihar. He began to doubt her integrity. Peasants and field workers in this village had to toil on indigo plantations in conditions of semislavery. It was a kind of indentured labor, though it was not called so. Mr. Gandhi, whose heart ever bled for the oppressed, took up the cause of his ex-

ploited countrymen. He went to Champaran in 1917 to see things for himself.

The indigo planters were predominantly European, and were interested only in profits; those that sweated for them were for them so many hands and mouths. Whatever they did, however unjust or cruel, was backed by the officials, who were in most cases their kin. Redress, in these circumstances, was out of the question. The poor Indian worker was like the ox that plods a treadmill until it drops with fatigue.

No sooner had Mr. Gandhi entered Champaran, than he was ordered by the district magistrate to leave the province, because, it was thought, his presence was likely to create trouble. But Mr. Gandhi refused to budge; in fact, he openly asserted that he was prepared to stand trial for disobeying the authorities. For a while the government did not know what to do; never before in its experience had an individual had the temerity to defy it. Confabulations between high officials went on in offices or bungalows. How to act? To punish the man would give him undue importance. The best plan was to remove the threat by allowing him to make suggestions. After all, he had been a trusted friend for long, and some reforms on the plantations would not come amiss. Two birds could be killed with one stone. The English have a marvelous capacity for turning defeat into triumph. They now decided to remove the order against Mr. Gandhi, allowed him to study for himself whatever he wanted, and ended by appointing a committee to investigate and rectify the horrors that existed on the various estates. This incident was fraught with tremendous consequences. The Indian Government was praised by the public for redressing wrongs so quickly, but what caught the imagination of all in India was Mr. Gandhi's fearlessness. He said again and again that he alone is heroic who can say No when the occasion demands it. For himself, he had always adhered to this rule.

He had defied the government not because he loved defiance but because acceptance would have been cowardly. By this act he destroyed, almost in an instant, the majesty of the imperial law.

The Indian public, though mostly illiterate, is educated in the larger sense—that is, it can comprehend a situation quickly. Many thousands of years of civilization have given it what might be called horse sense. It now saw that the government, before which everyone had trembled in the past, was powerless when confronted by the righteous refusal of a single individual. The courts were meaningless unless people admitted their jurisdiction. Law, which seemed above all men, had no existence of its own; ultimately it was relative. Indians suddenly awakened as from an age-long trance. The masses began to feel that the chains that bound them had been worn by them because they knew no better. A government existed only when the governed accepted it. No higher power had created it; certainly God had nothing to do with it; it was made by man, and could be unmade by him.

It has been necessary to linger over this event because it was the first thrust of the spade that dug the grave of imperialism. The divine right of rulership disappeared in the twinkling of an eye. Mr. Gandhi established the fundamental right of the citizen to disobey a law or an order that went against his conscience. Powerful leaders like Tilak and Gokhale had asserted their right to oppose the government when they found it to be in the wrong, but they had not dared to defy its orders. They contented themselves with agitation. Their rebelliousness was largely academic.

The news of Mr. Gandhi's ignoring the magisterial command flashed throughout the length and breadth of the country like a fiery spark. One man, by no means the most powerful or aristocratic in the country, had had the guts to

say Nay to the seemingly omnipotent white ruler. He acted quietly, deliberately, fearlessly, but his very moderation was sensational. No single action, since the Mutiny of 1857, so gripped the mind of the public as did Mr. Gandhi's polite refusal to leave Champaran. In a single instant, as it were, British authority crumbled into the dust, and a mounting wave of aggressive nationalism surged over the country. The cornerstone of India's bloodless revolution had been silently laid. The year 1917 was truly fateful, for it saw the beginning of the end. Champaran was Britain's imperial Waterloo, though it was dismissed in Delhi and London as a tempest in a teacup. Mr. Gandhi was adept at the little-known art of undermining institutions while appearing to preserve them.

Although the authorities took speedy action to redress the wrongs of the farmers and peasants, Mr. Gandhi was deeply disturbed by the appalling conditions that prevailed in Champaran. He was amazed that such horrors could exist, and began to wonder if his belief in the righteousness of the British Empire was not misplaced. On these indigo plantations, where the white owners waxed fat and lived luxuriously, he came face to face with naked poverty. This was possible, he believed, because the workers were spineless and disunited, each wallowing in his own misery, while their bosses stood together when their interests were at stake. In addition, the planters were protected by the government. There was no doubt that Britain was to blame for this iniquity, for, after all, she was the suzerain. The final responsibility, for whatever happened in the empire, was hers.

In 1918 the Kaira peasants appealed to Mr. Gandhi for help. A serious famine had broken out there, and those that lived by the land were entitled to total remission or suspension of taxes. The officials contended that the distress was being unduly exaggerated. Payment must be made as usual. Mr. Gandhi came, saw, condemned. He had no alternative.

The men were being victimized. He requested the government to reconsider their grim decision. His suggestions were dismissed as sheer impudence.

Mr. Gandhi, who rarely lost his temper and who had the capacity to turn the other cheek, asked the peasants to be nonviolent while quietly refusing to pay what was demanded from them. Considering the matter one of prestige, at first the government tried coercion, but soon found that this was not the right way to proceed. It was of no use to alienate the feelings of loyal citizens. In any event the men in Kaira were but a microscopic fraction of the Indian population, and it would not harm the Treasury to suspend the collection of revenues for a year.

Sometimes a stone dislodged from a mountain height precipitates a mighty avalanche that swallows up entire valleys and villages. Kaira was a pebble of such power, and it shattered the image of authority. *Satyagraha*, the doctrine of nonviolence, was born. Its function was not to kill or to destroy, but to disarm, and woo.

Mr. Gandhi, while helping the wretched, made the discovery that the masses of India were possessed of reserves of power which, if properly tapped, would make the country hum with activity. But because the masses were unaware of their power, he set about showing them the right path.

Mr. Gandhi, like the best representatives of Britain and America, hated anything that caused unnecessary sorrow or suffering. Injustice was unbearable to him, whether it came from an alien government or from his own people. Wherever he saw it, he had to do something about it. With him, as with all intrepid spirits, passivity in the presence of evil was complicity.

A dispute arose between the workers and the millowners of the wealthy city of Ahmedabad, in Gujarat. Gandhi studied the question thoroughly. Two colleagues, whose

judgment he trusted, aided him in his inquiry. All three of them came to the conclusion that the demands of the employed were just and fair, and the trio approached the mill-owners for a new deal. But their efforts were scoffed at as interference in private affairs.

In the India of that day, sahibism manifested itself in many forms. If the white ruler was perched at the top of the ladder, the brown plutocrat clung to the next rung, aping his master. In a word, the brown sahib was even more ruthless than the white. Nothing moved him but profits.

Such being the situation, Mr. Gandhi advised the workers to go on a strike. They were not to cause any damage or injury, but they were to take a vow not to accept anything below their minimum demands. Though the workers agreed, the men were ill equipped for a prolonged struggle. They held out for twenty-two days, and then began to weaken. Mr. Gandhi was deeply disappointed, and every evening, soon after sunset, when the air no longer came as from a vast hidden furnace, he would talk to the jobless workers and pray for their success. When he saw that all his efforts were in vain and that the strikers were losing heart, he decided to fast.

Both parties to the dispute were amazed. Mr. Gandhi's action, judged by ordinary standards, might seem quixotic, but his ethics were based on his own standards. He felt that he had committed a sin and that he must expiate it. Had he not identified himself with the workers and taken a vow with them? He felt that their vow was binding, individually and collectively, and that he must pay for the weakness of his comrades. Of this struggle he has said: "I am fully convinced that no body of men can make themselves into a nation or perform great tasks unless they become as true as steel, and unless their promises come to be regarded by the

world like the law of the Medes and Persians, inflexible and unbreakable."

Mr. Gandhi was accused by some of using moral blackmail while others complained that he was always trying to tie a very long tail to a very small kite. A few semi-intellectuals muttered that a spiritual acrobat had appeared on the Indian scene and was trying to capture power by performing a political rope trick.

The millowners soon acceded to the demands of the workers. No ill-feeling remained, thanks to the methods adopted by Mr. Gandhi. He had created an atmosphere in which men and masters could agree to co-exist without loss of prestige on either side. And because of his influence, which grew from day to day, the factory hand in Ahmedabad is today the most fortunate in the whole of India.

The mystic was proving to be the truest realist.

The future wrecker of the reforms was the first to welcome them as an honest attempt on the part of the government to fulfill its pledge of 1917. Mr. Gandhi knew the soul-destroying poverty of the masses, and its root cause was obvious to him, for he had traveled far and wide in the country. He had come to the conclusion that the common man, whether ryot or worker, was being overtaxed. In a now famous article, published in July, 1918, in the *Servant of India,* Mr. Gandhi wrote: "No scheme of reforms can possibly benefit India that does not recognize that the present administration is top-heavy and ruinously expensive. And for me, even law, order and good government would be too dearly purchased if the price to be paid for them is to be the grinding poverty of the masses. The watchword of our reform councils will have to be not increase of taxation for the growing needs of the country, but a decrease of financial burdens that are sapping

the foundation itself of organic growth. If this fundamental fact is recognized there need be no suspicion of our motives, and I think I am perfectly safe in asserting that in every other respect British interests will be as secure in Indian hands as they are in their own."

These words, not lightly uttered, give us a clue to the working of Mr. Gandhi's mind. His conception of government was in harmony with Mazzini's—that is, he tested government's every move, every scheme, every law by its effect on the nameless many. He was not a class fighter in the Marxian sense, yet he came very near to the philosophy of proletarianism when he championed the masses. "The Swaraj [Home Rule] of my dreams recognizes no race or religious distinctions. Nor is it to be the monopoly of the lettered persons nor yet of moneyed men. Swaraj is to be for all, including the former but emphatically including the starving toiling millions." Elsewhere, he has written: "The Swaraj which I have in mind is a poor man's Swaraj." He was never able to get others to accept this idea, but he persisted in it to the end.

Mr. Gandhi was too acute not to see through the shams of imperialism, but he was, as he himself said, "an incorrigible optimist," and continued to cling fast to his faith in the ultimate decency of British rule. His faith was finally blown to bits by the Rowlatt Act of 1919, a repressive measure that curtailed the liberty of Indians in many ways. Now he felt the mailed fist in the velvet glove. While Britain spoke of the right and privileges of citizenship in the British Empire, in actuality she treated millions in her dependencies as mere hewers of wood and drawers of water. This duplicity disgusted him. He was, he thought bitterly, a simpleton. Had he known the Americanism, he would have dubbed himself a "sucker."

The year 1919 was a calamitous one for India. Every mis-

fortune seemed to visit her. In some parts of the country the crops failed; in others there were floods; elsewhere, man-made evils, such as hoarding and inflated prices, made their terrifying appearance. To fill the cup of misery to the brim, Britain, disregarding public opinion, which included all political parties, from moderates to extremists, enacted what came to be called the Black Act. The procedure was simple: the Indian Government, through the Imperial Council, relying on the strength of the official majority, rubber stamped the decision of Whitehall.

Mr. Gandhi, for once, was enraged. Was this the reward of India for helping in the war effort—to have her liberties curtailed further? The Rowlatt Act seemed to bind the Indian hand and foot. Petitions and deputations failed; flunkeyism, endemic in India, proved its sterility. Mr. Gandhi, having considered the matter from all sides, advised the nation to adopt hartal, that is, complete cessation of all business. He asked the people to devote a day to fasting and prayer.

Here was something new in politics: no violence, no recriminations, no seeking of compromise. Millions of people, in all parts of India, obeyed Mr. Gandhi's injunction and did public penance for the wrong that had been done to them. Never before in the history of the world had an enslaved nation risen to such heights of creative humanism.

The 6th of April, 1919, remains ever memorable. Bombay presented a solemn sight: all shops were closed; the doors and windows of houses were shut, as though in sign of mourning; thousands of men, women, and children, clad in spotless white, streamed out to the beaches. There they waited and watched until the sun appeared on the rim of the eastern horizon and began to wash the world with its gold. Then, gazing at the orb of day, chanting hymns as old as the Hindu race, they dipped their bodies into the cleansing waters of the sea, having cast aside all hatred for those that

manacled them. Indeed, they were petitioning the Almighty to forgive Britain for the evil that was in her.

Mr. Gandhi had invented his new weapon in South Africa, where it had proved of great efficacy, but it was in India that he discovered its miraculous potency. The more people used it, the more powerful it became. It grew sharper by employment.

Mr. Gandhi was fighting imperialism openly, without recourse to force. His method was unique, that of diplomacy in which nothing was kept hidden or secret. The struggle was between spirit and brute strength. He himself put all his cards on the table; his wisdom lay in his fearlessness. Politics and religion were to him not two different or distinct activities, but one truth, that of organizing life on earth so that it became at once a thing of beauty. He wished to wed loveliness with holiness. Happiness, as we shall see, had no place in his vision of reality.

Officials in Britain and Delhi were highly amused. What was the silly blighter up to?

Satyagraha, passive resistance—how could anyone resist passively?

Mr. Gandhi was convinced that success was just round the corner. Father Winslow, in his *Dawn of Indian Freedom*, observed: "There can be little reasonable doubt that the success of India's long struggle is in sight. . . . We shall, within the course of the next few years, see an India which, whatever may be her precise relation to Great Britain, will be as free to control her own affairs as the other free countries of the world." The soul of three hundred and fifty million people was stirred to rebellion against an alien power, and no amount of force could quench it.

Mr. Gandhi read the Rowlatt Committee's report very carefully, but could find no sense in it. His own conclusions were quite different, and he said so in a manifesto published

on March 2, 1919. He began to suspect the motives of the government in passing the hated bill, and said quite openly that if necessary he would offer *Satyagraha* against it. He never acted rashly. Earlier, when in Madras, he had met and discussed the matter with Mr. Rajagopalachari, then a young lawyer reputed to be as wise as a crow, as gentle as a dove, and as subtle as a serpent. Opinions had been exchanged freely, and passive resistance had been thoroughly discussed.

Mr. Gandhi had been deeply impressed with Mr. Rajagopalachari, and, with his customary charm, had won him over completely to his side. The friendship ripened, so much so that later Mr. Gandhi's youngest son, Devadas, married a daughter of Mr. Rajagopalachari. This does not mean that the two men, who had so much in common, always saw eye to eye; Mr. Rajagopalachari always remained an independent thinker. He was and still is an acute critic.

As early as 1915 Mr. Gandhi had been called "Mahatma" (Great Soul) by Tagore in a letter of effusive welcome; the word had not immediately made its impact on the masses, but after the demonstrations against the Rowlatt bill, when Mr. Gandhi suddenly became known throughout India, it began to pass from mouth to mouth. But as he himself loathed it, I shall not, in deference to his memory, use it here. I think with Bernard Shaw that the proudest title that a man can have is to be called "Mr." or "Shri"; but Mr. Gandhi's case was slightly different: he was so well known, in East and West, that everyone simply called him by his name. Indians, among themselves, never use the term "Mahatma" or "Mahatmaji"; they speak of him as Gandhi, which indicates at once their admiration and affection.

Gandhi, then, was looking for a reason to adopt passive resistance. The Rowlatt bill, even though it stirred the public profoundly, did not seem to lend itself to his purpose. He thought of the Salt Act and the Seditious Literature Act.

Now he knew what to do: he would sell proscribed books in the streets.

On that sinister date when the Rowlatt bill became law, Gandhi was in Bombay, watching the behavior of the masses. His books *Hind Swaraj* and *Sarvodaya* had been honored by being blacklisted by the Bombay Government, and anyone handling them was liable to arrest and imprisonment. However, thousands of people willingly paid for these prohibited writings, took them home, and read them avidly.

Almost every Indian, rich or poor, had a horror of going to jail; to do so disgraced him for life; and to escape this horror he would go to any length, sometimes even courting death. Gandhi made it an honor to be imprisoned by the government; it was the proudest privilege that a patriot could claim. To have succeeded in transforming the attitude of his countrymen in this respect was nothing short of miraculous.

The spirit of fearlessness, shown by Gandhi and his colleagues, soon permeated the masses: they not only sold Gandhi's own works openly but also other books that the authorities detested. They held huge meetings, organized the picketing of liquor and foreign-goods shops, and observed hartals. The response of the common people to Gandhi's appeal was staggering. He was deeply touched; writing of that historic day, he says: "The whole of India, from one end to the other, towns as well as villages, observed a complete cessation of all work. It was a most wonderful spectacle."

Delhi had not been slow in following Gandhi's counsel since it had stopped all work a week earlier. The government, enraged by such insubordination, had shot down unarmed crowds. The belief seemed to be that bullets from the guns of a few Tommies or mercenaries were enough to give a quietus to mutinous conduct. It was that simple.

Delhi's local leaders requested Gandhi to see the situation for himself. He at once left Bombay, but at Palwal he was served with an order forbidding him from entering the Punjab, in which province the Indian capital is situated. Firmly, but politely, he declined to obey this ukase. Thereupon the police forcibly brought him back to Bombay. The news of his arrest spread like a prairie fire throughout the country, and the entire Indian nation went on a voluntary strike for twenty-four hours.

India presented a nightmarish sight: no cars or carriages were on the roads; there were no porters at stations; no shops were open; nothing but silence greeted one. India was like a body whose heart had ceased to beat.

Unfortunately, in some parts of India riots had broken out. The situation in Bombay was saved because of the timely arrival there of Gandhi. His very presence in the city pacified the enraged people. Of course, he had been released and allowed to resume his work.

In Ahmedabad and at Viramgaon the mischief had already been done. In one place a sergeant had been beaten to death and in the other telephone and telegraph wires had been cut. Gandhi was deeply distressed by these excesses of the mobs. He at once set out for Ahmedabad and, with the consent of the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Pratt, a far-seeing man, addressed a huge crowd in the city. He told them, without any mincing of words, that they had done wrong to destroy a European and to damage government installations. This was not the way he wished them to act; they were disgracing the fair name of India. He declared a penitential fast of three days for himself, and advised his hearers to repent by going without food for at least twenty-four hours. As for those who had indulged in violence, he asked them to confess their guilt. His treatment of the situation was characteristic. He could not condone evil-doing, no matter

whence it came. If a son of Gandhi had committed murder, and he had been the judge, he would, if convinced of guilt, have mercilessly passed sentence of death.

The Punjab had, along with the other provinces of India, joined the protest against the Rowlatt Act, but Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the then lieutenant governor, became jittery and took a number of unnecessarily harsh steps. He deported two leaders of the people, Dr. Saif-ud-Din Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal. People became furious, and ran amok. Some Europeans were murdered, not a few shops were looted, many houses were set on fire, and trains were derailed. Amritsar and some other places in the Punjab were for a time at the mercy of mobocracy. Any government worth its name was bound to take strong action, but it was certainly unwise and unjustifiable to hand over the administration of the province to soldiers. Sir Michael called up the military authorities and asked them to take things in hand. Then he went away, washing his hands of responsibility.

It is not my intention, nor that of my countrymen, to calumniate British officials, for we know only too well their good and bad points. Nevertheless there is not the least doubt that Sir Michael and General Dyer, the chief maladministrators of the day, acted like madmen. The story that follows would seem to equate Britain with the Germany of Hitler.

Jallianwalla Bagh is a well known place in Amritsar. Though it is called a garden, in reality it is only a rectangular plot of ground surrounded by houses. It has very few entrances and exits. One day a meeting was held there, and many attended it, young and old, women with babies in their arms, and men who were too feeble to walk but who were stirred by the autocracy of the authorities. Scarcely had the people gathered together when horror faced them. General

Dyer, without any warning, swooped down upon them with ninety armed Gurkhas, supported by two armored cars. Having closed the exits, he ordered the soldiers to fire. The bullets took their toll for ten minutes; the shooting would have gone on but for lack of ammunition. Then the butcher and his myrmidons withdrew. Many were dead; many more lay badly wounded. Three hundred and seventy-nine innocent people were killed and at least twelve hundred wounded, by official count. The brave general had done his job thoroughly; he had, in his own words, wished to produce "a sufficient moral effect, from a military point of view, not only on those who were present, but more especially throughout the Punjab."

Here some words of Sir P. Siwaswamy Iyer, for five years member of the Executive Council of the Government of Madras, and one of the most influential leaders of the Moderate Party in India, may be quoted. Referring to the Hunter Commission that was appointed by the government to go into the tragedy that occurred in the holy city of the Sikhs, he observed:

"Let us turn our eyes to some of the facts disclosed in the evidence of the principal European witnesses. The wholesale slaughter of hundreds of unarmed men at Jallianwalla Bagh, without giving the crowd an opportunity to disperse, the indifference of General Dyer to the condition of the hundreds of people who were wounded in the firing, the firing of machine-guns into crowds who had dispersed and taken to their heels, the flogging of men in public, the order compelling thousands of students to walk sixteen miles a day for roll-calls, the arrest and detention of five hundred students and professors, the compelling of school children of five and seven to attend on parade to salute the flag, the order imposing upon owners of property the responsibility for the safety of the martial law posters stuck on their dwellings, the

flogging of a marriage party, the censorship of mails, the closure of the Badshahi Mosque for six weeks, the arrest and detention of people without any substantial reason, and especially of people who had rendered service to the State in connection with the war or otherwise, the whipping of six of the biggest boys in the Islamiah School because they happened to be schoolboys and big boys, the construction of an open cage for the confinement of arrested persons, the invention of novel punishments, like the crawling order, the skipping order, and others unknown to any system of law, civil or military, the handcuffing and roping together of persons and keeping them in open trucks for fifteen hours, the use of aeroplanes and Lewis guns, and the latest paraphernalia of scientific warfare against unarmed citizens, the taking of hostages and the confiscation and destruction of property for the purpose of securing the attendance of absentees, the handcuffing of Hindus and Muhammadans in pairs with the object of demonstrating the consequences of Hindu-Muhammadan unity, the cutting off of the electric and water supplies from Indian houses, the removal of fans from Indian houses and giving them for use to Europeans, the commandeering of all vehicles owned by Indians and giving them to Europeans for use, the feverish disposal of cases with the object of forestalling the termination of martial law, are some of the many incidents of the administration of martial law, which created a reign of terror in the Punjab and have shocked the public."

This mammoth sentence winds and unwinds laboriously, but there is in it a cry that cannot be forgotten. General Dyer acted rashly, brutally, but it is only fair to say that he was afraid that the British Empire was in danger. He had to do something drastic. Though this does not excuse his conduct, it serves to explain his motives. He was not cruel for the sake of cruelty.

Gandhi loved his country, but this did not make him purblind; he was pained by the excesses of the populace, and condemned these in no uncertain terms. Whatever the provocation, people had no business to kill Europeans or to indulge in incendiarism. The Rowlatt Act was lawless, but that was no reason for Indians to be equally lawless. More in sorrow than in anger he said: "I have not been able to understand the cause of so much excitement and disturbance that followed my detention. It is not Satyagraha; it is worse than Duragraha [sheer violence]." He threatened to abandon the movement altogether if the masses did not remain absolutely nonviolent. He set about actively helping the government to establish law and order in the country. Expressing his intention of temporarily suspending civil disobedience, he observed: "I can do no less at the present critical moment. I would be untrue to Satyagraha if I allowed it by any action of mine to be used as an occasion for feeding violence, for embittering relations between the English and the Indians. Our Satyagraha must therefore now consist in ceaselessly helping the authorities in all the ways available to us, as Satyagrahis, to restore order and to curb lawlessness." Indeed, he wrote a pamphlet on the subject, advising his countrymen what and what not to do. Rarely has there been so correct a rebel. If authority was to be undermined, it was to be done constitutionally.

He was grieved to find that, for all his exhortations, the multitudes did not quite grasp his intentions; so, without more ado, he formed an organization known as the Satyagraha Sabha (Soul Force Association), whose function was to educate people in the theory and practice of his mantra, or instrument of thought. With the same end in view, he gave lectures, wrote articles, and distributed leaflets.

While he was soothing authority and admonishing his own countrymen, he did not hesitate to criticize the cruelty and

callousness of government officials. He said openly that the Punjab regime had no business to interfere with the right of the people to hold meetings and to organize processions of protest against the Rowlatt Act. He demanded full justice for the sufferers. Lord Chelmsford, the viceroy, after wrestling with his conscience for six months, condescended to appoint a committee to examine grievances. Then, Hamlet-like, he put the whole thing in the hands of Lord Hunter and busied himself with soliloquizing about the nuisance of being the representative of the king-emperor. This, of course, did not prevent him from holding banquets in grand style or visiting rajahs and maharajahs for a holiday, thus proving the truth of the Hindustani proverb, "While the common folk perish, their betters amuse themselves."

Meanwhile the Congress, on its side, though still an ineffectual talking shop, investigated the Punjab tragedy under the leadership of Gandhi, who was fast becoming a voice that was heard above all others. More than 1,750 witnesses were examined, and the findings were published early in April, 1920. A few weeks later the Hunter Committee put forth its report.

It is instructive for the impartial observer to study these two documents side by side. The government examiners indulged in plain whitewashing, glossing over barbarities with an insouciance that was un-English; the Indians, including such men of integrity as Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das, Abbas Tyabji, and M. R. Jayakar, reported the truth. Gandhi said, of the Indian statement: "They had not a single conscious exaggeration in it anywhere and every word in it is substantiated by evidence."

The government dismissed the Indian report and upheld its own lies and half-truths. Gandhi was truly disgusted. India could expect no justice from the British Government; she had to appeal to the power that was above earthly

powers. The only way to do so was for the nation to strengthen herself. "Be ye strong and ye shall be free" became from now on his message to his countrymen. By this he meant that they were to be truthful and nonviolent. He applied his dynamic energy to making India a country where the common man was capable of splendid heroism.

His faith in the British Constitution, which had persisted, had now received its death blow. The most loyal of subjects had suddenly turned into an implacable foe.

The agitation begun by Gandhi would not have reached its peak had it not been joined by the Muslims.

Lloyd George, then Prime Minister of England, had given a pledge that, when dealing with the Caliph, the Allies would take every care to respect the sentiments of the Muslims. The peace treaty was a shock. The Sultan of Turkey, who was the head of the Muslim world, from the religious point of view, received short shrift; he was not only humiliated but deprived of control over the holy places of Islam. This seemed unthinkable to true believers, yet it was true. Was Britain's word worth nothing? Sorrow gripped the heart of millions. True, the ruler of Turkey was not a paragon of virtue; it was also true that he had been foolish to side with the Kaiser; but he happened to be the undisputed keeper of the conscience of the followers of Mohammed. As such, he was sacrosanct. How dare the Allies, particularly Great Britain, treat him with contempt? A cry of horror went up from one end of India to the other: "Britain has betrayed us!"

Gandhi at once took up cudgels on behalf of the Muslims; their cause was just, and he must aid them as best he could. However, his altruism was not unmixed. Remembering the example of his good friends the English, he wished to extract a benefit from his actions. And why not? After all, he was

born in a Vashiya family (the third Hindu caste among the Hindus, identified with the business community), and the Vashiya philosophy or ethics was a part of his spiritual heritage.

Here I may be permitted to refer to a quality of Gandhi's that, so far as I know, no other famous man has shown: When he had to do something that was not quite correct, from an absolute point of view, he filed and refiled it until any evil excrescence on it had been scraped off. He did this so effectively that his questionable courses always appeared as the most righteous conceivable. Perhaps this might be called political and moral transubstantiation.

Gandhi championed the Muslim cause; indeed, he put behind it not only his own weight but the weight of all Hindu India. By this simple act, fraternization flowed between the two warring sects in the country as naturally as light from the sun.

The British, while in India, had always followed the Roman precept "divide and rule," and had succeeded remarkably well, by siding now with one community, now with the other. Hindus and Muslims looked at each other inimically, each party suspecting the other. Such being the general feeling in the country, one community's meat was the other's poison. Why, then, did the Hindus fight for the Caliph, who meant nothing to them? In fact, they secretly rejoiced at the man's downfall. Now the Indian Muslims would be deprived of extraterritorial loyalty. Soon, forgetting their allegiance to Turkey and the Arab world, they would settle down to being good Indians.

Though Gandhi was too shrewd a man not to know all this, he took up the Muslim cause with real fervor not only because what he was doing was good in itself but also because it would lead to bridging the gulf between Hindus

and Muslims that had been artificially created by the British. His logic cannot be questioned.

It would be ridiculous to suppose that Gandhi imagined that the united effort of Hindus and Muslims would make the least difference in the plans of the Allies. He knew that the victors were drunk with their triumph, and wished to seize what they could. Who was there to stand in their way? The East lay prostrate, and Japan, the one power there that counted, had been tossed the jackal's share. Gandhi's ultimate purpose was to generate wrath that, at its height, could be turned to nobler ends.

Two zealous men, the Ali brothers, now entered the Indian scene, and play not a little part in the events that follow. Both were cultured, highly educated, and utterly fearless. They loved their religion, and were ready to die for the Muslim cause. For a while, they threatened the government with armed revolt. Gandhi met them, listened to them, sympathized with them, and quietly turned their fury into the peaceful channel of noncooperation. From 1919 to 1922 these men worked shoulder to shoulder with Gandhi, and would, if necessary, have gone to the gallows for his sake. The friendship between Gandhi and the Muslim brothers was emblematic of Hindu-Muslim unity. Never before had there been such cordial relations between the two great sections of Indian society. Gandhi was moved to say: "Swaraj is practically achieved, as complete confidence and mutual trust are established between the two communities. . . ." He was a little too hopeful, but he cannot be blamed for his optimism; at the time Hindus and Muslims seemed to march in step.

It is impossible to write about India or an Indian without mentioning the cow, an animal that plays and has played a mighty role in our destiny. Now, one thing that has long

divided Hindus and Muslims is the cow: the former want to worship her; the latter want to eat her. This leads to quarrels, fights, even massacres. Often, for the sake of a miserable-looking cow, who is unable to stand on her legs and would be better off dead, thousands of Hindus and Muslims have tried to destroy one another.

Gandhi, for all his knowledge of other religions, was a Hindu who was ever true to the faith of his forefathers. He loved the cow and wished to shield her. In fact, such was his affection for this charming quadruped that he stopped drinking her milk, even when advised by doctors to do so during an illness, because he knew that she was often subjected to cruelty to make her yield the last drop of milk in her udders.

Because Gandhi wished to protect the cow, he helped to mobilize the Muslims for the Khilafat Movement, engendered to save the sultan, without any conditions. The result was that the Muslims in India voluntarily gave up the slaughter of the cow so as to respect the feelings of their new-found friends the Hindus. Gandhi, as Mrs. M. G. Polak has pointed out again and again, had the knack of making a suggestion and then shifting the burden of the decision to the other party. This left both friend and foe on the horns of a moral dilemma. Gandhi knew, as few others, the vulnerable side of man.

By yielding, Gandhi vanquished. He brought to birth, at a stroke, Indian nationalism. This shook the foundations of British rule in India. The authorities were truly worried. This ugly man, with protruding ears and some of his teeth missing, who dressed like any Gujarati peasant, and talked a spiritual dialect that smacked of prehistoric piety, had them cornered. It was apparent to them that, since the coming together of Hindus and Muslims, noncooperation had assumed gigantic proportions. Everywhere the people were

rising against the government. As yet, they had done nothing; they were waiting for a word from Gandhi. The situation was ominous. Many friends of the British thought that the rule of the white man in India was in danger of imminent collapse.

The viceroy lost his head; calling together his advisers in council, he conferred with them, and, before anyone could warn him, spoke of strong action to nip danger in the bud. His advisers agreed to what was suggested to them. An order was issued to apprehend Gandhi.

VII

THE REBEL

GANDHI, at the end of 1922, had just returned from a long and tedious journey to Ajmeer. As he now traveled in a third-class carriage, where being comfortable was out of the question, he was more than a little tired. Having finished his immediate tasks, he said his prayers and was about to retire for the night. All was quiet around him.

Suddenly there was a stir, and lights began to appear here and there. Someone came running to Gandhi to tell him excitedly that the police were coming to arrest him. Soon a crowd of disciples, men, women, and children, collected. What was going to happen to their beloved leader? Some were crying, some were sobbing outright, and some were too pained to utter a word. Gandhi looked at them with vast tenderness, and said: "I am grieved to see you grieving. Suffering is the lot of man; it alone leads to light. For myself, I am happy. Please don't change my mood."

A police van arrived, and an Englishman, a Mr. Kelly, flanked by turbaned stalwarts, stepped out and made his way toward the little group, some members of which had already begun to sing Gandhi's favorite Gujarati hymn. Even the emissary of law, hardened as he was, was deeply stirred.

Gandhi smilingly held out his hands to be handcuffed. The Superintendent of Police gently asked him if he would be so kind as to step into the van. Each man vied with the other in courtliness. Gandhi was every inch a gentleman, and the Englishman was fully conscious that he was leading into incarceration the acknowledged leader of India.

Gandhi was taken to the Sabarmati jail, practically on the borders of the ashram where he had lived up to now. Every requirement of his was satisfied by the government, though it must be emphasized that he had reduced his simple needs to an even greater extent.

Gandhi's trial began a week after his imprisonment. He was charged, under Article 124A of the Indian Penal Code, with "bringing or attempting to bring into hatred or contempt or exciting or attempting to excite disaffection towards His Majesty's Government established by Law in British India." Three of his articles were selected from among his journalistic writings to prove his guilt. The prosecuting magistrate, Mr. Broomfield, treated the prisoner with the utmost consideration. In fact, he spared no opportunity to be gracious.

Gandhi, unwilling to prolong the farcical proceedings, and knowing full well what was in store for him, at once pleaded guilty. But he allowed himself a statement that has become historic. He explained why he had turned, like Balaam's ass, from blessing into cursing; he had been a stanch loyalist, and now he was an uncompromising disaffectionist and non-cooperator. He had lost all faith in the rectitude of the British Government. Nothing could move him from this position. He requested the magistrate to inflict on him the highest penalty that lay within his power; he had committed a crime, but it was a crime that appeared to him to be the highest duty of a citizen.

The magistrate was, as events proved, a man of culture

and refinement. He knew that if subtlety was being used by the great Hindu, he could not, on his part, employ a clumsier weapon. He too would try to destroy with kindliness. Turning to Mr. Gandhi, and choosing each word with care, he said, in regretful tones, that he had no alternative to convicting him. He thanked the prisoner for having made the judge's task so easy. It was impossible, he continued, for the government to let Gandhi go free. Law and order had to be maintained. He said that he was giving Gandhi the same terms of imprisonment that had once been given to another political rebel, Tilak—that is, six years. But without hard labor. He concluded: "If the course of events in India should make it possible for the Government to reduce the period and release you, no one will be better pleased than I."

Never before, in the history of India's political struggles, had such a trial been staged: exemplary judge, exemplary prisoner, exemplary crime, exemplary verdict. India and Britain faced each other courteously, but with bitterness in their hearts. The Indo-British psychological comedy had begun; soon it was to turn into a romance. Gandhi had not defended himself in any way; he had merely waited to see what the British would do, knowing him to be innocent. Was their famous fair-mindedness verbal or actual? He said to the magistrate: "I will say one word more. Since you have done me the honour of recalling the trial of the late Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, I just want to say that I consider it to be the proudest privilege and honour to be associated with his name. So far as the sentence itself is concerned, I certainly consider that it is as light as any judge would inflict on me, and so far as the whole proceedings are concerned, I must say that I could not have expected greater courtesy."

An impartial journalist, N. C. Kelkar, has left us an eye-

witness account of the trial. This is what he says: "This great trial was not so much a trial *by* the State as a trial *of* the State itself. . . . The judge was the most pathetic figure among them all. . . . Never was he charged with a more unpleasant duty. Never did he feel, as he did on that day, that an accused under judgement could be superior to the judge himself. . . . Mahatmaji, by his personal example, had shown a true type of fearlessness, which neither long time nor short memory can ever efface."

Now followed a touching scene: before Gandhi was led away, his friends and disciples crowded around him, just to be near him. Many of them touched his feet reverently; quite a few sobbed, and some of the women present looked at him and shed silent tears. We are not told whether Kasturbai was there or not; but wherever she was, in the ashram or elsewhere, her heart must have bled. She did not always share the views of her husband, yet she had come to establish with him a communion of spirit that transcended all differences of thought and feeling.

Amid the sorrowing band, Gandhi stood serene, like a rock unmoved by the waves. He caressed the head of a boy disciple, smiled at another affectionately, and pinched mischievously the cheek of a weeping young girl. He spoke a few words of encouragement to an old woman, and quickly succeeded in calming everyone. Then, bidding them all goodbye, he turned and walked away, going to jail as to a feast.

Gandhi was sentenced on the 18th of March, 1922. He had expressed a sincere wish before the prison gates closed on him that the country should keep absolute peace and make no demonstrations in his favor. The people, though they obeyed him without question, treated the day as one of mourning. All business ceased, and a hush, such as precedes a storm, fell over the land. A famous Indian, Hakim Ajmal

Khan, writing to Gandhi about the conditions he had noticed, said: "It gives me infinite pleasure to see that the country observed perfect peace on your arrest. This is a clear sign of the spread of the spirit of non-violence in India, which is as essential for our success as pure air is for life." It will be seen that ahimsa was spreading fast. One of Gandhi's cherished *idées-forces* was taking root in the mind of the masses. To the credit of the government it must be said that it looked after Gandhi's comfort reasonably well. All facilities normally given to a model prisoner were afforded to him; but, curiously enough, he was denied the elementary right of having visitors or writing letters. The authorities were afraid that Gandhi was growing too big for his sandals. Perhaps they thought that it was best to isolate him, in the hope that the fierce zeal he had aroused in the country would die out.

From the Sabarmati jail Gandhi was soon transferred to the salubrious climate of Yerawda, in Poona. Here, even in hot weather, the nights are cool and balmy. Gandhi was pleased by the change. Was it not here that the great Tilak served his first imprisonment for political offense, and came out more than ever determined to oppose the government? He was following the footsteps of a noble son of India. Something of the dead hero's steel entered his spirit and strengthened it. His surroundings, too, spoke to him of what the many owed to a few. He was now in the heart of Maharashtra, whence the great warrior Shivaji had issued to destroy the tyranny of the Mogul emperors. The very air he breathed was untouched by the anguish of the past or present; it had in it something that made one long to be as free as the birds of the air. For himself, he wished to reach God by serving man. He prayed for strength to achieve this his goal of goals. The freedom of India was only a milestone on his great journey. It was necessary because the land of

the Vedas, he now saw, had a special mission: to spread love and light in the world.

Gandhi's patriotism, then, was ultimately spiritual. Because it was so, and utterly free from the taint of political nationalism, it gradually transfigured even his worst foes. The British, even while fighting him, were succumbing to his ideas. Slowly but surely, their psyche underwent a change. As a past viceroy had once put it, Gandhi had the knack of making one feel dirty. "Once he was gone out of sight, one wished to go away and wash and wash."

We have heard of jugglers, of thaumaturgists, of wrestlers with the powers of darkness, but here, for once, was an alchemist of the soul. Whoever met Gandhi was never the same again.

Gandhi was given two rooms with a veranda, and was allowed to take a daily walk in the courtyard of the prison. He used his privileges so far as he needed them. Often, it is said, he would watch intently the movements of a bird or insect. The squirrel, for example, never seemed to be tired of turning round and round in the same hole. Was man different? He had seen on the shores of Time a strange footprint, and when he examined it, he found that it was his own. We were all imprisoned in the self like flies in amber. The ego, then, ought to be modified to a plenum of love for all.

So Gandhi meditated; but his speculations, however far-ranging, always returned to the earth of the senses. He couldn't forget the little ones at the ashram. Were they being properly fed? Were they doing their school lessons as they should? Were they, above all, attending the evening prayers? Whether his mind was ever set at rest on these matters we don't know, for he was entirely cut off from all contact with the outside world.

There was a little mouse that used to scamper over Gandhi

when he slept. He who had once let a mamba glide over his legs without flinching did not mind in the least the delicate attentions of this little creature. He tried to make friends with it, but the food he offered was rejected. Then, one day he offered the mouse a little goat's milk that had curdled, and the creature, mistaking it for cheese, ate and enjoyed it.

This story came from a nephew of Gandhi's; whether true or not, it is symbolic. Gandhi had the gift of making curdled goat's milk pass for delectable cheese. He gave India, at the end of his fight, curdled independence, but everyone regards it, even today, as a boon from the gods. Gandhi succeeded in making *seems* and *is* synonymous. The net of Maya that he spread was wide and fine-meshed; it caught even the most slippery fish.

Gandhi himself described his prison life as a kind of preparation for even greater conflicts. By inward meditation, and by supplicating the Powers that be for guidance, he evolved the program that he was later to offer to his country. His one purpose was to subordinate his will to the larger Will, and thereby arrive at passionate disinterestedness. Whether he succeeded or not, there is no doubt that personal interests, such as move most mortals, vanished from his purview, and he became a mere instrument.

About the end of 1923 his health began to cause anxiety. At the beginning of the new year his physicians found him to be suffering from a grave ailment. The public heard of this in a garbled version, and became anxious and restless. Many feared that the government was not giving him proper treatment. This was not true. The prisoner had been suffering from a fever that at times caused his temperature to rise to 102 degrees. Ramdas inquired about his father's health, and was told that there was nothing to worry about. "There is no cause for anxiety. You can see him when you like." The ban on visitors was lifted.

Now wild rumors began to fly about the country. It was even suggested that Gandhi was slowly being poisoned. The atmosphere became tense. People were waiting and watching. Given a chance, they would let loose their wrath in a terrible manner.

However, to everyone's relief the authorities issued the following statement on the 13th of January, 1924: "Owing to his being found to be suffering from abdominal pain and fever, Mr. Gandhi was removed from Yerawda jail on Saturday morning and taken to the Sassoon Hospital at Poona. An operation was performed and Mr. Gandhi was found to be suffering from appendicitis. He stood the operation very well."

Whatever happened to Gandhi had in it an element of the dramatic. While chloroform was being administered to him, the electric lights failed. The medical students who were present rushed to their rooms and came back carrying crude hurricane lanterns and table lamps, and the operation was performed successfully.

A person who saw the illustrious patient after his ordeal said: "He seemed so emaciated that I felt I could hardly bear to look at his pale face; but I did not miss the characteristic smile that seemed to caress one."

Gandhi's normal weight was about 112 pounds; now he barely weighed 80 pounds. He was a ghost of his former self.

Gandhi was sent to Juhu, a seaside resort near Bombay. His convalescence took no more than three weeks; his powers of recuperation were marvelous. Even before he had picked up sufficient strength, he had began to work from his bed. Nothing could keep him idle.

On the 5th of April, 1924, while Gandhi was dictating some letters, he received his release order. Glancing at the paper, and silencing those who wished to congratulate him, he went on with the immediate task. Gandhi knew many periods of

gloom, times when he saw no light anywhere, but he never seems to have known any intense joys. In a very vital sense, he was a man of sorrows.

Popular jubilation over the release of Gandhi was without precedent. All communities united in treating the day as sacred. Great cities, such as Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, and Delhi, went mad with joy. Arches and illuminations appeared everywhere; bands of boys and girls went marching through the streets, singing songs of patriotic fervor; children were to be seen wearing their gala dresses. India, like many Oriental countries, is at heart sentimental, capable of dropping from ecstasy into the depths of despair. Now, because her leader had been set free, she rejoiced unreservedly. It was a moving sight to see peasants and workers traveling hundreds of miles just to get a glimpse of Gandhi. Often they waited days for the privilege.

Juhu quickly became a place of pilgrimage. Gandhi was still so weak that he was not allowed to exert himself, yet such was his love for the people that he would struggle to the window to bless the masses that had come to do him honor. C. F. Andrews spoke the bare truth when he observed: "There is a ruler of India here in this hospital, Mahatma Gandhi, whose sway is greater than all Imperial power. Constitutionally, King George V might be the Emperor of India, but ask any man there 'Who is the ruler?' and he will reply: 'It is Gandhi.' His sceptre rests not on army and navy but on love, devotion and service to the poor."

Gandhi had become, after his incarceration, more powerful than any dictator. Millions, in every section of society, were ready to do his bidding. Now he walked on the beach, leaning on the shoulder of a favorite relative or friend, and listened to the gentle murmur of the waves. He remembered his boyhood at Porbandar when he roamed, carefree, with the tang of the sea in his nostrils.

According to *Young India* of March 13, 1924, when Gandhi was once again a free man he passed his day as follows:

"He gets up at four o'clock, a practice which he invariably followed. After family prayers, in which the household joins, he reads religious literature for a time and then goes off again for a short sleep. At six he has his breakfast of milk, and afterwards, still following his old medical adviser, he takes a walk on the veranda and treats his wound to a sunbath. Immediately after this he attends to his correspondence, both English and Gujarati. In order to deal with the former he has been provided with shorthand-typists who greatly facilitate his work. His time until mid-day is occupied by correspondence, the study of political problems, and the seeing of important political and other friends by appointment. Early in the afternoon he has his bath and at four o'clock is ready to see the very large number of visitors who call on him. . . . In the evening, about six, C. F. Andrews takes him for a walk along the seashore and this walk has now been prolonged to about forty minutes. The day's work is over by about eight, at which hour Mr. Gandhi usually retires for the night."

This was certainly a very crowded schedule, and one that seemed to give Gandhi no time for the contemplation of the real problems that concerned him; yet, somehow, he never lost sight of these. He had two formidable duties before him: first, he had to get rid of the British in India as rulers without hurting them as individuals; then, as soon as possible, he had to supply the means that would aid and support the supine masses. All his politics, if any, resided in this program. His ends were larger: to make life a hymn of joy for everyone, in East or West. He was not bound to India or even to Asia, but to truth. In his view, the best way of serving God was to serve man.

Gandhi still loved and admired the British; what he loathed, and what he did not hesitate to call satanic, was their colonial

system. This distinction must be borne in mind if we are to understand his motives. Britain, as a ruling power, had to be got rid of, but the British could remain in India as friends and fellow workers. This was Gandhi's real wish, and he spared no effort to fulfill it. Today he would be pleased by the fact that the British, having lost authority in India, are now able to go about the country as fellow citizens.

Indians had been subjected, on Gandhi's counsel, to tests of endurance. From now on, he believed, constructive ideas must be put before them to make them self-respecting and self-reliant. To achieve this end, he made elaborate plans, which included, among other things, the making of home-spun cloth, the removal of Untouchability, and the creation of a fraternal bond between Hindus and Muslims.

Britain had, and still has, a passion for commissions. If there was trouble in Egypt, a commission was appointed; if there was trouble in the Sudan, a commission was sent to investigate; if there was an uprising, a commission would quell it. India, of course, had so many commissions and missions thrust upon her that it is now a waste of time even to recall them. Dignitaries came, talked, investigated, enjoyed themselves at government expense, and produced bulky reports that made confusion worse confounded.

The English have a genius for solving their problems by "muddling through." When they face unpleasant realities, they tend to evade them.

To Indians, ideas are to be translated into daily life. Because the English had talked to Indians about liberty and freedom for over a century, such concepts took root in the Indian mind, and became desirable necessities.

Indians, particularly Hindus, have an answer for almost everything: they know not only what they have to do on every occasion in this life, but they are also sure of the place that is going to be reserved for them beyond the grave. This

is at once their strength and weakness. It makes them survive, but survive in, as it were, a glass cage. Gandhi was no exception to this; the true spirit of Westernism remained hidden from him.

Politically, however, he was fortunate; the ground had been prepared for him in India by many powerful personalities, from the days of Raja Ram Mohun Roy to the time of Tilak. All he had to do was to plant the right seeds and to water them with care. Being by nature a farmer, he succeeded in this supremely well. When the Cripps offer of Dominion status came to him in 1942, an offer that Jinnah, his great adversary, was prepared to accept, he declined it unceremoniously. According to some, both in India and in England, this was not only catastrophic but calamitous.

After India had been given her independence, I happened to be in the House of Commons. Seeing Sir Stafford Cripps, I congratulated him on the part he had played in the freedom of our country. He looked at me sorrowfully, and said: "It is none of my doing; I didn't want to divide India; it is your countrymen who have done it. They are shortsighted. Go and speak to Amery and he'll tell you the same thing."

I took the hint. Amery, at one time Secretary of State for India in the Churchill Cabinet, spoke to me for about an hour on what he and the Conservative Party were trying to do for our country. "Our objective was to leave behind us a strong, prosperous and united India. At the moment we were in power this was not possible, and I tell you why. Mr. Gandhi, however good and subtle he may be, has somehow failed to understand Mr. Jinnah, and Mr. Jinnah is not a man whom he can lightly dismiss." He paused, sighed, and went on: "Indians seem to trust the Labour Party; you think that their leaders are enamoured of you. What naïveté!" Here he recalled to me certain words of Mr. Churchill's during the war: "If it is necessary for me to sell my grandmother for the sake

of England, I'll do so." Amery laughed. "We English are like that, no matter to what political side we belong." The English had determined to give India her freedom, but on certain conditions.

When they found that their global interests were not going to be protected by the majority, the Hindus, they played their cards accordingly. We cannot really blame them: there is no such thing as a missionary imperial power. Self-interest, whatever the sentimentalist may say, guides both men and nations.

During the war, as early as 1941, a friend of mine, Sir William Barton, told me, in the strictest confidence, that Mr. Churchill had asked him to go over to India to explore the possibilities of converting the country into "Jacob's coat." When I looked shocked, he said: "Congressmen are not only boycotting the war effort but are trying to create in Asia a coalition of hearts and wills against us. This is dangerous, mighty dangerous. We have no option but to cut off India's head, arms and legs. We shall leave you with nothing but the writhing trunk."

Gandhi knew of this, and acted accordingly. He was sure that the longer the British remained in India, the worse it would be for the country; they had to go, cost what it might. So, in 1942 he created his famous slogan of "Quit India," united the country behind him, and made it impossible for the imperial power to remain.

Gandhi's achievement, considered as a whole, was stupendous. No one, in modern times, had succeeded in pushing the British out of their strongholds. Napoleon tried it, and failed; Hitler tried it, and failed even more miserably; Gandhi alone, without shedding a drop of blood, made the British withdraw. In this respect, and this alone, he was a politician without an equal.

But the price he paid, or rather was compelled to pay, was

colossal: India was cut into two, and what followed was a tragedy beyond the imagination of man. Butchery took place in many parts of the country on a vast scale; the collision between Hindus and Muslims was particularly shocking in the Punjab and in Bengal. No one was spared: children were battered to death; women were abducted and ravished; the old and the decrepit were pitilessly slaughtered. It is estimated that nearly eleven million people were uprooted and became refugees; the Muslims trekked to Pakistan, and the Hindus to India. The whole country was in the grip of terror. Neither state can be absolved from blame; each was guilty of criminal negligence.

Gandhi's disillusionment was complete. He had preached ahimsa, nonviolence, when fighting the British; now, among his own people, he saw with horror that his theory had made little impression. For thirty years or more, ever since his return from South Africa, he had put before the public the matchless weapon of nonviolence. Now, in the hour of crisis, and indeed at any moment of danger, this ahimsa had been rejected, and violence voluntarily chosen. Had he toiled in vain?

Everyone paid him homage—and then went his own way. Had he but one follower—himself? Kasturbai, Rajendra Prasad, Vinoba Bhave, and disciples scattered here and there seemed to follow his path, but they were a drop in the ocean of Indian humanity. He had succeeded in rousing the masses; they were now on the march, and the tramp of their feet was terrifying; but he had not been able to inject into them his doctrine of ahimsa.

The freedom of India was for Gandhi only a step in the right direction. His main concern was quality of life. He wanted human beings who were classless and casteless, able to treat color and creed as matters of accident. He desired equality of races, equality of nations, equality of opportunity

for all men in all lands. The world that he dreamed of will perhaps never come; imperfection is the lot of man; all that wise statesmen can do is to reduce to a minimum the various discords that exist. In India he did not usher in a new dawn, but he ignited a torch that still throws its light. The stain of Untouchability is fast disappearing; so is the stain of woman's subordination to man; and so is the stain of the common man's almost atavistic will-lessness. The villager, whom he thought to be the heart of India, and for whom he toiled unremittingly, no more grovels in the dust. He is now an upstanding man who at last is able to cultivate his patch, spin his cloth, and who even has time to read the books of his country's immemorial wisdom.

Gandhi put far more into life than he received from it. By that test alone he is among the supremely great.

But while Gandhi concentrated on huge problems, moving from phase to phase like a force of Nature, his personal life remained a garden in which there were patches of miraculous beauty and patches that were choked with weeds.

VIII

HOMESCAPE

THE English are a race of hero worshipers. Those whom they revere, for one reason or another, can, according to them, do no wrong. Indians are no different; however, they sanctify their heroes, putting them beyond the reach of mortal frailties. The ideal swallows up the real. The result in either case is that it is difficult to separate fact from legend. Fortunately, Gandhi died only recently, and there are quite a few still living who knew him and his ways intimately. Sometimes it was difficult to make these men and women speak frankly, but perseverance has had its rewards.

Pushkin said that the poet is a creature of power when Apollo touches him with his breath, but in everyday life he is the shoddiest of shoddy beings. This is true, not only of poets but also of those whom we may call searchers or pathfinders. Many saints have been physically dirty, but Gandhi was scrupulously clean. Not only did he have a bath daily, including exposure to the rays of the sun, but he had his whole body, from top to toe, massaged with oil and lemon juice for a full hour. Naturally, even in old age, his skin shone, as an artist once put it to me, like a brass censer in a well-kept church. But he had his oddities, crudities, and even barbari-

ties. These, because they were unconscious, were all the more oppressive.

We have seen how, soon after his marriage, he treated his child-wife, acting as though her will did not count. Seeing her rebellious, he modified his ways, but his basic attitude of requiring obedience to his wishes did not alter. In South Africa he made her carry, against her will, the chamber pots of guests. Years later, when living in the ashram, he requested her to treat an Untouchable family as she would her own. Her retort was instantaneous: "Go and tell Bapuji that I'll treat these people with every attention, but so far as identification with my own is concerned, he had better do it himself."

Some money was once given to Kasturbai for a fund. She kept back five rupees, and handed over the balance to the fund authorities. Gandhi noticed her act. When the evening prayers were over, and everyone was waiting for a speech from their leader, Gandhi, looking at his wife sharply, said: "Every penny that the public gives me is meant for some useful purpose. Whoever retains even a little amount for his or her use is guilty of a great sin."

Kasturbai sat silently, though she was feeling miserable; but she possessed a poker face, and it could not be made out whether she was confessing or not. Gandhi waited a minute or two, and then remarked: "Ba, what about the five rupees that you are carrying tied up in a corner of your dress?"

Kasturbai handed over the money, and then went off, sobbing.

No doubt Gandhi was incorruptible, but what lack of tenderness or even consideration! Kasturbai, from all that we can gather, could not have taken much pleasure in their relationship. Perhaps he was incapable of living together with anyone, or perhaps he disdained to. He took her physically in the early years; later, when a change had come over him, continence and even absolute physical separation were im-

posed. He was always denying his wife trivial little luxuries. Throughout her life with him, suppression succeeded suppression. Even in the matter of food or clothing she could not consult her own desires; she had to accommodate herself to all his ways. Finally, she could not bring up her children as she wished. But, good wife that she was, she resigned herself to her lot. What a Calvary! Kasturbai deserves to go down in history as a martyr and saint. But though she did as she was asked by her husband, her spirit was by no means destroyed; on occasion the fire in her leaped up and terrified everyone around her. At such moments Gandhi quietly slipped away.

A European woman, who had met Gandhi several times and who had lived in his household, says that she would not have liked to be a member of his family. Asked why not, she replied: "Nobody seemed to be himself in his presence; everybody was trying to appear good. Awful! Gandhi was a failure so far as his children were concerned; they were tongue-tied before him and somehow uncomfortable."

Gandhi, as everyone knows, had a keen sense of humor, and enjoyed a laugh at his own or another's expense. Defeat only brought out the best in him. Yet to those whom he had brought into the world, and to whom his affection was necessary for their proper growth, he gave little of his vast kindliness.

That his children grew up unhappy in one way or another cannot be denied. They had to do what he desired, not what they themselves pined for. His eldest son, when a youngster in South Africa, wanted proper education, not the haphazard lessons he was getting at home; but he dared not mention the matter to his father. He requested Mrs. M. G. Polak to intercede on his behalf. It may seem odd that he should not have gone for this to his own mother, but perhaps he knew her limitations too well. Hadn't she herself approached Mrs.

Polak when the question of his and his brothers' clothes and shoes came up for discussion? Gandhi was opposed to Western dress for his family, though he himself did not disdain lounge suits or a silk hat. His children had to be brought up in the simplest and most natural way possible.

Mrs. Polak's intervention produced little or no effect. Gandhi had definite notions about education. What these were is perhaps best brought out by the following dialogue, taken from Mrs. M. G. Polak's book dealing with Gandhi in South Africa:

MRS. POLAK. What is natural? We really do not know.

GANDHI. But we do. Nature speaks through our instincts very clearly, if only we listen to her.

MRS. POLAK. I do not agree with that. My reason used to tell me it was not true, and now my experience confirms it. The whole of our young life is one long training out of our natural instincts.

GANDHI. That is where we are wrong. That is where our conflict comes in.

MRS. POLAK. But children left to themselves would be impossible as members of any society, for even their natural functions have to be trained. I don't believe they would walk upright unless they were taught and encouraged to do so.

GANDHI. Of course they would. It is natural for man to walk upright.

MRS. POLAK. No, I do not think it is natural, in the sense in which you are using the word. It is natural that a human being can do so, but I believe children would just shuffle along like monkeys, unless they were taught otherwise. There is that story we recently heard of the child who was stolen by baboons from a Boer farm, and when found years afterwards she used an arm and hand to help herself along. Children would not learn to speak, unless they were

taught to do so. They would just grunt and make strange sounds.

GANDHI. You are exaggerating, and you do not believe all you are saying.

MRS. POLAK. I am logical and know that what I say is true. My baby has the capacity for expressing the qualities that belong to human life; but I realize that I have to train him in their expression. Every mother and nurse knows that, during the early years of a child's life, she is training the child out of its natural instincts. Think of one thing only, how everything a child gets hold of he puts into his mouth. If it were poison, he would soon die. Nature does not seem to teach him that he may not chew coal or poison-berries. He . . .

GANDHI. In a natural condition of life, he would not be able to get at coal.

MRS. POLAK. But he probably would get poison much more easily.

GANDHI. No, your reasoning is false. Were it otherwise, we would not have survived as human beings. Nature guides us and protects us.

MRS. POLAK. Nature guides us through the mind of man, I am thinking, and the mind of man is also nature. Where can you say, this is nature and that is not?

GANDHI. I think there is a line drawn between the works of beneficent nature and the evil that the mind of man conceives.

This discussion was resumed on another occasion, and its conclusions are worth noting:

MRS. POLAK. You rather seem to think, or to imply that you do, that children should be just left to grow and not be spoiled by training.

GANDHI. What I mean is this: children have in them the spark

of God, and society so covers it up that they forget it or it is killed in them.

MRS. POLAK. But the spark of God is not killed because a child is not allowed to give way to his natural instincts. To eat with a spoon, for instance, or to wash with soap, or to cut his toe-nails with scissors, would not make him any the less conscious of the God within. Saints have come out of civilized life as well as from the Himalayas.

GANDHI. Yes, but in spite of it, not because of it.

MRS. POLAK. Do you think children would grow as perfect flowers in a garden if left to nature? I do not think so, and even in a garden the best flowers are nearly always trained by the gardener. They become very different specimens under training than they were in their original state.

GANDHI. Yes, they do become different. They are trained to please the eye by their appearance, but the soul of the flower, the scent of it, is lost in the process.

With all deference to Gandhi, it must be said that his reasoning was specious; the original nature of which he spoke is, as Ibsen pointed out long ago in his *Peer Gynt*, an illusion. Homo sapiens is a product of the environmental influences that have played upon him; in himself he is an onion, which contains only a series of layers. It is the purpose of education to direct certain aptitudes into fruitful channels. In a word, the human being, by proper training and discipline, can be made humane, which is what the Buddha sought to teach us.

However, it is idle to agree or disagree with Gandhi; what matters is the effect of his views on his children. None of his sons could be called educated in the real sense of the word; each picked up such scraps of knowledge as came his way. Even Devadas, the most accomplished of his boys, was stuffed like a sack with uncoordinated facts; but of him I shall soon speak at greater length.

Gandhi's sons, I have suggested, stood in awe of him and did not get from him either normal affection or normal training. They came to shun him. His eldest son, Harilal, so far drifted away, emotionally and morally, that, as soon as he could manage it, he left the family roof. Because his life had been an endless chain of taboos, he let himself go; he drank heavily and consorted with prostitutes. Later, in 1936, when his father was a world figure, he shocked everyone by becoming a Muslim.

Devadas, the favorite son, was known to some of us as "The Nabob." Outwardly, he was all that a man might reasonably ask of a son: polite, well behaved, soft-spoken, and said the right things at the right time. But he was not an ascetic in any sense of the word; he ate well, indeed rather copiously, and enjoyed particularly what his father detested—condiments and pickles.

Devadas' apartment in New Delhi, above his offices in the Hindustan Times building, was more than comfortable. He did not like walking; at the slightest excuse he would send for his chauffeur-driven car. He enjoyed going to the Willingdon Club, where he liked to hold court over lemon juice. Whenever he was in Bombay, he patronized smart restaurants. He liked the delicacies put before him, but what pleased him most were the surroundings. It was amusing to find him admiring the crockery, napkins, curtains, carpets, in fact, all material things.

Whenever he was in London, and that happened fairly frequently because he was a director of the Press Trust of India, he used to ask me to take him to some exclusive eating place. Sometimes he paid, and sometimes I did; but he always used to ask me what was the correct tip to give: "I do not wish to waste money, yet I do not want to appear mean."

Devadas was a lovable person, and many of us were extremely fond of him; yet it was clear to us that he had a cool

Unlike his father, he did not stay in a cubbyhole in the East End; he preferred the comforts of the Dorchester Hotel. I saw him several times there. Generally, he sat in his elegantly appointed room barefoot, with a shirt over a dhoti. He was a vegetarian who did not disdain eggs, and he was particularly given to coffee, which, he seemed to think, was the morning beverage of the socialites in England. He was trying very hard to be like an English gentleman. Here, I believe, something of his father's early hankerings had descended to him.

One afternoon, before attending a conference in Fleet Street, he asked me if I would be so good as to help him to choose a few ties. Being aware that he wanted good things at bargain prices, I deliberately took him to Burlington Arcade, where nothing is cheap, though the quality is always excellent. He paused before a shop window and gazed long and intently at some ties. I was getting impatient, and suggested that we might go in. "These things," he said, pointing with his finger, "are very expensive and seem to me quite ordinary." I wondered what exactly he desired, but before I could express my thoughts, he remarked: "I want ties that have dancing girls on them; these are plain; I am not yet in mourning; I want something that cheers the eye. All my life I have been deprived of color and fragrance. Now I am my own master, and can have what I really long for." At that moment, in the heart of Piccadilly, on a dreary afternoon, I saw, as in a flash, the tragedy of Devadas' life. He and his brothers, while their father lived or was with them, had perpetually to repress and suppress their longings.

Certain things that Devadas told me that day and later on are illuminating. He said that once, when he was a boy of five or six, he had suddenly felt very hungry. Finding nothing to eat in the kitchen, and his mother being out, while his father was working in another room, he went into the storeroom, climbed on the table, and opened a tin box in which

there were some sweets. He picked up a *ludoo* (an Indian delicacy), but he had scarcely put his teeth into it when his father appeared on the scene. "So you have now turned into a thief, have you?" he was told. "Hand over that thing to me at once."

"But I'm hungry."

"That is no reason to take things without permission."

Devadas was not allowed even to finish the bite he had already had. He was peremptorily ordered to spit it out. Then he was informed that, as punishment for his bad behavior, he would be deprived of his meal that evening. "I cried my heart out," said Devadas, "and went to bed famished. How I hated my father that night! If I could, I would have killed him. I know I was wrong, and I know also that I deserved the treatment he had given me; he was teaching me how to be an upright man; but he quite forgot that I was a little fellow, and so incapable of understanding his loftiness. All I knew was that rats seemed to be gnawing at my entrails." He stopped for a while, then continued: "Fortunately, Mother was made of a different mettle. Late at night, while I was suffering, she tiptoed into my room, caressed me, and fed me on the quiet. She was wonderful; unfortunately, she could not do very much for us; most of the money was in Father's hands, and he kept a strict account of everything that was spent. Not that Father was mean; indeed, his hospitality was famous; but he seemed to think that children, particularly his own, just 'growed' like Topsy."

On another occasion, Devadas related to me, he wanted to taste some small green chilies because the others at the dinner table seemed to be enjoying them. He asked for one, and his father told him that it was not meant for him, because it was rather bitter. He persisted in his demand. At first he was ignored; then his father turned to him and said that if he wished to taste the chilie he would have to finish the whole

plateful. Devadas began to chew his first chilie, and soon found that it was like fire in his mouth. He wanted to spit it out, but he had his father's eye on him. With difficulty he finished one. Then his father pushed the plate toward him and said: "Go on; polish off the whole lot." Devadas, used to implicit obedience, continued to munch the chilies while tears ran down his cheeks and his tongue felt as though it were being stung by a hundred scorpions. "I can never forget that experience," Devadas concluded. "Even now, after so many years, I get a violent headache if I so much as see a green chilie on the table."

It must not be supposed from these stories that Gandhi was cruel—far from it; but he had his own methods of teaching a lesson. The horror lay in the fact that he was likely to confuse the wants of childhood with the larger sanities of manhood. He demanded so much from everyone that almost everyone who came in contact with him felt inadequate. Because, for some reason, he felt guilty, he made others look guilty. The sense of sin was always with him. Here, he was the exact opposite of what is known to us as the ancient Greek; Gandhi seems to have been thoroughly infected with the Jewish element in the Christian Bible. The antique Hindu, such as was to be found in the Vedic Age, was not sicklied over by the thought of having deviated from the path that led to heaven; for him, work was prayer, and prayer a form of creative love.

That Gandhi administered drastic treatment for a fault is also brought out by an incident that Mrs. M. G. Polak recounts. It is so characteristic that it must be given in full:

"One of the children was inclined to be, as so many small boys are, rather greedy. Of the dishes he liked most, he would keep asking for more and more, and when checked would be sulky or rebellious. Mr. Gandhi had tried reasoning with him;

but the child was only a tiny boy and his father's reasoning made no impression upon his appetite. At last, one evening, Bapu told him that he could have as much as ever he wished to eat and that no one should stop him or check him. The meal proceeded, the child sitting at table in his usual way, and having eaten all he could, he laid his head upon the table and fell asleep. The table, however, was not cleared even though all of us had finished, and presently the child woke up again. Mr. Gandhi asked him if he wanted anything more. He replied in the affirmative and recommenced eating. We still sat at the table, not hurrying the child in any way, but talking of many things. Eventually, the little fellow could not swallow any more, and being filled to repletion, he commenced to cry. Mr. Gandhi took no notice of him, and when Mrs. Gandhi wanted to attend to the child, he prevented it. The child cried quietly for a little while, and tried to go to sleep again, but he grew more and more uncomfortable, and eventually had to be carried from the room. This Mr. Gandhi did quite tenderly, taking him in his arms and carrying him upstairs to bed, where his mother took him in charge. Most of the night he was unwell, but the lesson was never forgotten, and the child never again worried to be given things to eat that were refused him."

Gandhi overlooked the fact that tenderness is a plant of delicate growth, which can easily be destroyed or made to wither by a rude touch. He was content to remain a zealot. He was always right, but not always wise.

Chaganlal, his nephew, related to me many stories that throw a glaring light on his uncle.

"As a boy," Chaganlal said, "I had gone over to Africa to live in the Gandhi household at Phoenix. I was by no means a model lad; to tell the truth, I was quite naughty and loved to play pranks with my fellows in the colony. Now there was

a well, or rather a deep hole in the ground full of water, where the frogs congregated. Their croaking amused me and some of my companions. How did these creatures make their queer noise? They reminded me of Brahmans at their prayers. As I was tired of hymn singing, which Uncle and his friends, Indian and European, were ever fond of, and in which I had to participate, whether I liked it or not, I imagined that by destroying some of these frogs I would stop the very source of all psalmody. How my logic worked then I don't know; but, as you may have found out, the reasoning of childhood confuses will and wish with fact. The frogs, I was sure, inspired my uncle and his colleagues to imitate them. End of the one, I believed, would lead to the end of the other. Anyhow, I and a few friends waited behind some bushes one evening, after rain, to get at these rascally frogs. First one emerged, then another, another, and another. In a circle they sat and set up such a croaking that even the birds in the trees fluttered away. We had stones in our hands and, at a signal from me, they were flung at the prayerful party. Our shots were not quite accurate because dusk was fast falling. However, when we went to the spot where the frogs had been indulging in their pious jargon, we found only one, with both its legs broken. Nemesis soon overtook us, for Uncle was upon us before we could scamper away. He saw what we had done, and there was in his eyes a blaze such as I had never seen before. Catching me by the ear—by the by, my ears, like his, are pretty large—he twisted it so hard that I thought he was going to wrench it off. I screamed, but he paid no heed to me; he now attended to my second ear. This time I howled. At last he released me, and said: 'Go back home, along with your companions, and remain with Ba until I return to tell you what your punishment is going to be for your wanton cruelty to God's harmless creatures.' I must say here that I did not mind the ferocious twisting of my ears, because after a

while the pain disappeared; what chagrined me was the fact that I was the only one who had borne the whole brunt of the escapade; my mates had gone scot free. How did Uncle know that it was my stone that had done the damage? But he was ever severe with those who were nearest to him. As we moved away, we saw Uncle bending and trying with infinite precautions to pick up the injured frog. Finally, he succeeded in his efforts and brought the ugly thing to his room, where he kept it in a cardboard box and fed it himself until it gave up the ghost."

There is, it appears, an evil side to good. Love that embraces all may ultimately embrace only shadows. Blake was right: infinity can be held only in the palm of one's hand, and in no other way. The concrete alone leads to the universal.

Gandhi was essentially an idealist. The way to the highest was ever his goal.

Consider this picture as painted by Miss Slade (known to many Indians as Mira Ben): "A young heifer in the Sabarmati ashram dairy had fallen ill; the sickness was incurable. It lay on its side, helpless and in great suffering for many days. Bapu decided that the kindest thing would be to relieve it of its tortured life. But he did not wish to take the step without carrying with him the inmates of the ashram. For two or three days, intense discussion prevailed. Ba and Kashiben could not tolerate the idea of taking the heifer's life. So Bapu said, 'Then you both go to the cowshed and nurse the heifer just as you would nurse your own child.' They went and sat with the heifer for hours. The sight of its suffering and their own helplessness to do anything to relieve it convinced them of the truth of what Bapu had said. They, and those who had thought like them, withdrew their opposition. Then Seth Ambalal Sarabhai was asked to arrange for the most painless death possible. Accordingly he came personally with his family doctor. Bapu, the dairyman, and myself accompanied them

to the cowshed, where the heifer was lying. Bapu stooped down and gently held one of his front legs for a few moments. The doctor then gave an injection and all was over. Bapu took a cloth and silently placed it over the heifer's face and we all walked away in silence. For weeks after this, Bapu was bombarded with letters on the subject."

Gandhi, no doubt, was gentle, but why did he, who always said that he was prepared for the sake of truth to stand against the whole cosmos, take so long to put an end to the misery of the poor animal?

Having too many servants around him was not to the liking of Gandhi; one or two sufficed, and these he treated with exaggerated consideration. Because they were performing hard tasks (no job was too lowly for Gandhi), he tried to relieve them of their burdens as much as possible. This meant, in practice, that Kasturbai or someone else had to do additional work. He himself was an egalitarian, but neither his family nor his guests were. This led to occasional comedies. Sometimes poor Kasturbai would be grinding corn or peeling potatoes for many mouths while a domestic would be sitting in the sun, taking his ease, and even smoking a cigarette on the sly.

Gandhi was a just man, but Kasturbai often wondered what un-Hindu god he was really worshiping. She had heard many stories from the sacred books of India, but she could not recall one in which the masters toiled while the servants lolled. It is true that Rama, whose name was ever on her husband's lips, had once eaten the remains of an Untouchable woman's food, but he had done so in gratitude for her great adoration for him. That was understandable; in any case, the ways of the gods were inscrutable, and who was she to question them? But her husband was a mortal like herself, and should act like one. She knew perfectly well that he was no superhuman being; she remembered how he had

groaned and moaned when his first molar had been extracted. Not only had he been short-tempered, shouting at the children for no reason, but he had enjoyed her fussing over him. He was, like most men, a child at heart, but a child who was fast forgetting the innocent note in him through too much knowledge and self-exploration. Then, thinking that she was in any case not a learned woman, and so perhaps a little foolish, she abandoned her ideas and went to work. She did not know how profound she really was; she possessed that rarest of qualities, hard common sense.

Kasturbai was attached to her husband by many ties: he was hers by holy wedlock, which nothing but death could break; he was the father of her children, who were the light of her eyes; he was in himself fundamentally clean, with no habits that anyone could reasonably object to; yet why was there an emptiness within her? Why, when she was alone, did tears well forth from her eyes? She put it down to her stupidity. Was not her husband the beloved leader of millions in all parts of the world? Even the English, who ruled over the country, treated him as though he was special. Surely, whatever he was doing was right; somehow she must be wrong. What will be, must be. Submit: there is no other way. Such was her simple but inspired attitude.

Her house, wherever it was, in South Africa or in India, was not *her* house; it was a caravanserai where people perpetually came and went. When she was a young girl, and living at Porbandar, she could see her husband only at night; during the daytime, even if he happened to be at home, she was not supposed to be with him for more than a few minutes, for it was considered vulgar to enjoy publicly the company of her husband. Her mother-in-law, the decorous Putlibai, would not have stood for it. Later, in South Africa, she always had strangers living with her; in fact, many who had nowhere to go just came in and resided with her. At last,

after years of exile, she returned home, again to find an abode where everyone was welcome. True, from time to time she visited her parents and relatives, but a fireside of her own was never hers. Her husband's life was like an endless public meeting: talk was all she heard. No doubt it was deep, fine, even noble stuff, but she would have preferred quiet chats with her husband. Ever since she could remember, from the time her husband became a barrister, he was always in a hurry, always busy with a problem, always thinking of someone other than herself and her children.

She did not know what privacy was, for the conception was foreign to her upbringing. Gregariousness, when one person is ever touching the heel of another, was the rule in India. Something seemed to be missing from her existence, something that made the blood run fast and filled the world with light. Her husband was dearer to her than life itself, but he had failed to awaken music in her; she was like a bird over whose cage a cruel hand has cast a huge pall.

Like most women, in India or elsewhere, Kasturbai liked to have a dainty homescape; but her husband, as the years passed, became more and more austere in his ways. Once, while in South Africa, Mrs. Polak had asked him for some curtains. He had seen no necessity for them; because the view from the windows was so wonderful it seemed to him a shame to hide it with a piece of cloth, however attractive. He was quietly reminded that it was not a question of cutting off anything but a simple matter of hiding the ugly woodwork. Kasturbai recalled this incident and said to herself that her husband did not seem to mind how or where he lived so long as he had a mat to lie on. For him, it seemed, closed-in spaces were a horror; he preferred an alfresco existence. She liked a room where she could be comfortable, and entirely by herself. If she was untidy, there would be no one to pull her up.

As it was, she was constantly under the eye of her husband, who had a mania for tidiness, while providing little to be tidy about. He who has visited the various ashrams where the Gandhis lived will have marveled at the bareness of their rooms. This bareness has not the grand simplicity of a Japanese home or of a Chinese painting, where emptiness suggests infinity, but a barrenness that reminds us of Eliot's waste land, where not a single flower blooms.

Gandhi wanted to live the philosophy of the Gita. Nonattachment seemed to him the heart of the matter. He progressively shed all possessions, contenting himself with what was absolutely necessary to keep body and soul together. But there were two difficulties: first, he became attached to nonattachment, making it almost a fad; then—and this is far more reprehensible—he slurred over the fact, which the Song Celestial had emphasized, that each one must pursue his or her own path. He wanted everyone to follow him and his ways, in scorn of consequences. As Pilate reminded Jesus, there are as many truths as men. There is no one way of salvation.

Gandhi himself said that one who is anxious to pursue larger enthusiasms and greater ends than most men desire should remain single. Perhaps, perhaps not. Marcus Aurelius showed us centuries ago that it was possible for a saintly life to be led even in a palace. However, Gandhi, like some other prophets, had a right to his opinion; what puzzles the earnest inquirer is that, having assumed the duties of a family man, he did not perform them with grace. He had no right to subordinate the wishes of his wife and children to his theories. His home, which might have been a sanctuary of joy, became a dismal laboratory where ideas—political, moral, spiritual, economic, international, even untouchable and unmentionable—were being churned out ceaselessly.

Gandhi was attempting the impossible, trying to reduce the self to a cipher. So intent was he on the larger goals, that he forgot the deeper needs of his wife and children. Ignored or rebuffed, they retired into themselves or pursued separate paths. While Gandhi was working for the unity and dignity of Indians, his own home life was crumbling within.

IX

THE GREAT OBSESSIONS

In one of the great short stories of the world, "An Evening with Monsieur Teste," Paul Valéry shows, with sovereign art, what happens to a man who seeks nothingness. According to him, the pursuer of nothingness ends by becoming a burning pyre of pain.

Gandhi was far more subtle than the French experimenter; he squeezed out, drop by drop, many of his cravings, but allowed his mind to sharpen itself to a needle point. The result of this attitude was unexpected: Nature, being turned out the door, entered through the window. But now it had assumed, as though out of spite, a virulent form. Gandhi did not know what had come upon him, but there was no doubt that he was in some ways like one possessed or obsessed.

There was a voluptuous quality to his abstemiousness, directly related to the power in his humility. To unravel the enigma of Gandhi's personality, one must take into account the insights to be gleaned from his great obsessions. His determined denial of self was to become legendary. Only his closest followers were aware that Gandhi's great saintliness masked an exotic spirit preoccupied with, and in constant struggle against, the temptations of human appetites.

Although pleasure of any kind, including that of the palate, was abhorrent to him, his interest in food increased as the years went by. What or what not to eat was, as we can see from his letters to his disciples, a passion with him. He tried innumerable experiments, from the time of his stay in South Africa to his last days in Birla House. Now he had simple fare, without even salt and pepper; now he had nothing but raw vegetables and fruits; now he reduced himself to taking only curds and fruit juices. He was trying to keep perfect health, to be sure, but there was more to his efforts than appears on the surface. He desired to have such meals as stirred his blood the least, and which were at the same time nourishing.

Gandhi was not the first to have discovered the value of what the human body absorbs in the shape of nourishment, but he put extra emphasis on proper elemination. The connection between elimination and sex, as Freud has pointed out, is both close and intimate. Both functions afford relief. Gandhi returns to the subject again and again. "Constipation" is a word that occurs in his vocabulary like the refrain of a song. In his letters to Miss Slade, as also to others, friends or disciples, he is always talking about it. Gladly, he offers remedies, having tried many of them himself at various periods. He had found that certain Indian herbs were not only the most effective for this purpose but also the cheapest.

Why this great obsession with food and elimination? To enjoy meals was for Gandhi something barbarous; they had to be taken as medicine. He had no doubts at all on this subject; he was as categorical as anyone can be. "The Gita," he wrote, "enjoins not temperance in food but 'meagerness'; meagerness is a perpetual fast. Meagerness means just enough to sustain the body for the service for which it is made. The test is again supplied by saying that food should be taken as one takes medicine in measured doses, at measured times and

as required, not for taste but for the welfare of the body. 'Meagerness' is perhaps better rendered by 'measured quantities.' I cannot recall Arnold's rendering. A 'full' meal is therefore a crime against God and man—the latter because the full-mealers deprive their neighbors of their portion. God's economy provides from day to day just enough food for all in just medicinal doses. We are all of the tribe of full-mealers. Instinctively to know the medicinal dose required is a Herculean task, for by parental training we are gluttons. Then, when it is almost too late, it dawns upon some of us that food is made not to enjoy but to sustain the body as our slave. It becomes from that moment a grim fight against inherited and acquired habit of eating for pleasure. Hence the necessity for a complete fast at intervals and partial fasts for ever. Partial fast is the meager or measured food of the Gita. Thus 'There is no prayer without fasting' is a scientific proposition capable of verification by experiments and experience."

He elaborates the same idea by saying: "The condition of our own body should be the sole guide as to the quantity without any reference to that taken by others. All we should recognize is that voluntary meager eating is one of the most difficult things in the world. It is the perpetual fast that is much more difficult than the complete periodic fast. Meager food voluntarily taken *must* lead to perfect poise, i.e., perfect health of body and mind. We can but make the attempt."

So far as he himself was concerned, he was satisfied with this menu, in jail or out of it: "Paupau, twenty dates, four oranges, two sour limes, four dessert spoonfuls honey, one lb. goat's milk, one dessert spoonful almond paste. Honey I take twice with hot water and ten grains of soda bicarb. Milk in the morning and almond paste in the evening. There is a variation between the paste and half lb. milk. This gives you an accurate idea of my food. I began yesterday to take unboiled fresh milk. They say that unboiled milk if fresh and

clean is any day preferable to and more digestible than boiled milk. I shall watch the effect of the experiment."

That Gandhi's diet was healthful there is little doubt; but few either East or West would care to follow it from day to day.

One thing is perfectly clear from Gandhi's experiments in dietetics: he wanted to subdue his passions. He knew, both from books and by personal experience, that spices, condiments, and rich dishes somehow excited man's libido. That side of him he desired to suppress as much as possible, if he could not eliminate it altogether. Sex, as supreme enjoyment, was horrid to him. Its only real meaning lay in procreation. Such, at any rate, was his belief after he had given up all physical relations with his wife at the age of forty. The rest of his life he spent in annihilating his passional side.

Gandhi seems to have felt that if he ate only the very simplest food his sex instinct would not receive any stimulus, and if he severely checked his sex impulse he would not need anything to excite his palate. The two appetites, food and sex, were interlinked in his mind, each sustaining the other.

This theory does not seem to be wholly borne out by the facts. The most prolific section of a nation consists of what are called the poorer classes; these multiply far more than their more fortunate compatriots, the rich and the well placed. It is true that other factors enter here—for example, the desire of the better-informed to restrict their families, so as to be able to give them the best possible chances in life; yet there are many highly placed persons who do not seem to produce children with any extraordinary facility. Indeed, some medical experts are of the opinion that delicate food, instead of augmenting the passions, seems, on the contrary, to dampen them.

Food can be a substitute for sex. A man who has eaten

well and to repletion tends to fall asleep; he who is hungry cannot rest, and has to satisfy himself in some way. Copulation costs him nothing, so he indulges in it to forget his misery. This is perhaps the main reason why the various peoples of Asia, especially of India and China, are in danger of reproducing themselves into extinction by starvation. Give these men and women good and ample food, and the population problem will become somewhat less pressing.

Of course, from his own point of view, Gandhi was right: overeating is the cause of many diseases. He knew this from personal experience; there was a time, as we have seen, when his appetite was immense. Gradually, he controlled it; yet it is only too true that he never succeeded in achieving his aim. Just as the sex impulse in him kept haunting him, so craving for food came upon him from time to time. The two demons he despised most worried him all his life.

The following story, told to me by G. S. Bajpai, one-time Secretary General for External Affairs, is revealing. In 1931, during the Round Table Conference in London, everyone on the Indian side had been overworked. One day, Bajpai had had no time for lunch; having a few minutes free, he went into Gandhi's room. "There was our Mahatma sitting on the floor, with his spindly legs tucked under him, eating fruit from a basket that had come from Fortnum and Mason's, and bearing a label showing that it had cost two pounds and fifteen shillings. The basket was almost empty. The Mahatma held in his hand a bunch of superb grapes; he seemed to be enjoying himself thoroughly, for there was in his eyes a merrier twinkle than was generally observable. He asked me if I had eaten. I had to confess that I had been too busy to have even a bite, and that I was famished. He looked at me peculiarly, offered me a single grape, and went on eating until the bunch in his hand was gone."

I reminded Bajpai that Gandhi insisted that food was to be

taken like medicine. He burst out laughing. "He always prescribed medicines for others; as for himself, what he called medicines were the choicest of delicacies. These were different from other people's, but they were nonetheless things that were by no means inexpensive. How many Indian peasants can afford dates and oranges and almond nuts and papayas and honey?" Then he referred me to a saying of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu's: "The money it costs India to keep the Mahatma in poverty!"

It is far from my intention to make mockery of Gandhi's ways; I admire him this side idolatry; but the first and last concern of a biographer is fidelity to facts. Gandhi, in the matter of food, was peculiar, but he knew what his system needed most. Indeed, we are compelled to admire his sapience. He had understood but too well the meaning of the Socratic injunction: "Know thyself." Jesus, we are told, "came eating and drinking"; Gandhi turned vegetarianism into a fine art. His dishes, though they seemed to us utterly insipid and lacking in poetry, gave him real satisfaction. A glass of goat's milk, with a touch of castor oil in it, was more to him than champagne is to some. *Chacun à son goût.* Nevertheless, the fact remains that Gandhi was more or less lacking in the aesthetic sense, for he rarely spoke of the beauty of things; that side of him seems to have remained undeveloped. What he finally discovered and what gave him peace was splendid asceticism.

Gandhi was an absolutist; for him nothing existed but the One, and the name of this August Presence was Truth. There are many who hold that the finite mind of man cannot comprehend the Infinite, and that the very search is ludicrous, if not impertinent.

That there should be men like Gandhi is obvious; they remind us that not the increase of wants but their reduction is what leads to true progress. We are apt, everywhere, to

forget the golden mean; it is good to be reminded of it from time to time, especially in these days when there is still poverty in the midst of plenty. But Gandhi slurred over the difference between goodness and greatness. The two are not identical, though they may be somewhat intermixed.

Gandhi increasingly sought health. Deeper minds, including that of Shakespeare, remind us that health is a sign of mere animality; it is when the body is deranged that the hidden doors are suddenly flung open. Gandhi, by putting such peculiar stress on keeping fit, shut for himself some of the windows that opened out on the great Unknown. Further, he tried to proletarianize the spirit of man, thereby depriving it of all subtle distinctions. Renan said, "All truth lies in nuances." Gandhi did not look for the dim borderland where light melts into shadow and shadow into light. He never speaks, in his vast correspondence or in his innumerable articles, of the fragrance of a fragrance, or of that something that makes not a fourth sound but a star. He is an overscrupulous physician, ever preoccupied with his weight, his temperature, his appetite—in short, his physical well-being.

He strove to attain poise and balance. To a very large extent he succeeded in his aim, but not entirely. Just because his body continued to be cared for, as well as was possible, the devils that he wished to eject completely, food and sex, tormented him all the more cruelly. Gandhi's preoccupation with night soil was something nightmarish; excreta, which are (always excepting those of the holy cow) an unmentionable subject to a Hindu, fascinated him. Anyone who had anything to do with Gandhi, whether in South Africa or in India, had to play the part of a *bhangi*, or sweeper. How many Europeans have, after tasting the delights of simple food and simple surroundings, including sleep under jeweled skies, been made to carry pails of night soil? Miss Slade played a heroic part. Again and again she was sent to this

or that village to teach the people hygiene by personally removing their ordure. But they just laughed at her and her co-workers, and went on accumulating foulness upon foulness.

That Gandhi wanted cleanliness is true; that he believed no task was vulgar cannot be denied; but that there was a deeper motive behind his action must be faced. It was connected with sex: What removed tension was in no way offensive. Gandhi received a kind of sex satisfaction by concerning himself so much with elimination. Obviously, this was not enough; his libido, constantly repressed or diverted from its natural channel, shot forth like noxious fumes.

His ethics came to forbid all sexual relations, even between husband and wife, except for the conscious purpose of procreating offspring. That this might mean the restriction of the sex act to three or four times in a lifetime did not worry him in the least: he maintained that such strict self-discipline was not only possible and right but quite easy. He imagined that high continence was the key to mental and physical vigor. Not satisfied with this rigid ruling, he went on to say that a really virtuous man should not have any wish for progeny. "A man whose activities are wholly consecrated to the realization of Truth, which requires utter selflessness, can have no time for the selfish purpose of begetting children and running a household." This may be true, but why did he marry and beget heirs? It is true that he entered into wedlock when too young to realize its significance; yet marriage had taken place, and there was no escaping it. One cannot take up a burden today and say tomorrow, when one's ideas have changed, that one will not honor it. Whatever pretty name we may give it, it is the plain shirking of a necessity. To complicate matters further, Gandhi did not believe in the use of contraceptives but in self-restraint. He put upon the ordinary man a strain that even an exceptional being found too

much for him. That he himself was, during the latter part of his life, pure physically is undeniable, yet he was not free from troubled dreams and desires.

During a certain illness, he himself has confessed in *Harijan* (December 26, 1936), "Whilst I was asleep, I suddenly felt as though I wanted to see a woman." The revealing part of his recital of "this frightful experience . . . the blackest moment of my life," is his bold statement that this was the first time that anything of the kind had happened to him in nearly forty years—that is to say, from the age of twenty-seven onward.

Gandhi frankly confessed his experience, but what of the shadowy feelings and stirrings that moved his being when he was asleep? Adultery, Jesus has taught us, is not only of the body; its worse form is to be found in the mind.

The chemistry of sex continued to occupy Gandhi; his letters to a young girl, at one time a member of one of his ashrams, proved this abundantly. He goes into details that only a family doctor is entitled to deal with. His frankness is, to say the least, disconcerting, if not disturbing.

A well-known Bengali professor, who was for a period an inmate of one of the ashrams, says, in a book he has written, that he had to leave in protest because Gandhi, while being massaged by him in the open air, without a stitch on, allowed women to come near him. He thought this shocking. Gandhi, however, ignored the objection, and continued the practice.

If food and sex were obsessions with Gandhi, the British were no less so. They haunted his imagination.

From his earliest days he had admired the British and, despite many shocks, he continued to do so to his end. What he liked most about the British was their sense of fair play. "Live and let live" was their credo. Gandhi was deeply impressed by this, for it was in consonance with the deeper teachings of his own country. India had never been a nation

in the Western sense of the word; it was something far more grand—a cosmopolis, where various races intermingled to form a many-sided society. He had imagined that Britain, in her Empire, was striving for the same glimmering goal. But what he saw more than disgusted him; it hurt him like a knife thrust. This great knight-errant among nations was gradually becoming corrupted by possession; from want it had gone to gluttony.

Gandhi was an acute observer of men and things; he had found out, early enough, that the ruling classes in Britain were not to be confused with the real British, who were the people he really respected. For the former he had no use; indeed, he did his best to liquidate them; for the latter he kept a warm corner in his heart, for he always hoped that they would somehow teach the white race that prosperity was one and indivisible. The backwardness or misery of one nation was a drag upon the rest of the world; he dreamed of a New Imperialism, the Imperialism of Aid instead of Exploitation. Each had to be responsible for all. The Briton alone was capable of seeing and appreciating Gandhi's vision, because he had the innate capacity of putting himself into the shoes of the other man.

One type of Englishman Gandhi understood very well—the man with a conscience. Later on, as years went by, he discovered, with a shock of surprise, that this quality was more widespread than he had suspected; even those who clung to their possessions, and for whom property was a thing inviolable, had certain pronounced scruples. He once told an English friend, according to Edward Thompson, that Indo-British relations would have been much easier had it not been for the presence of so many Scotsmen in the British services in India. These persons were lacking in imagination and always thought in terms of pounds, shillings, and pence. He himself understood only too well the value of

money (was he not by instinct thrifty?), but he could, when necessary, be extravagant. The cause was what mattered most.

Because he knew that the English were basically moral-minded, he played to this side of their nature in season and out of season. He gave them opportunity to be cruel and at the same time ashamed of themselves. The result was that in the end they could not bear the constant assault of the spirit; the armor that they wore became so tight that it choked them. Voluntarily, they flung it away, only too glad to put on their customary tweeds. This they could do only at home, in England; abroad they had, like the Chinese, though in a different fashion, to keep up appearances, or what is called "face."

Gandhi understood one side of the English as no other Indian had ever done; but of their deepest motivations he remained ever unaware. The English are at once practical and poetical, uniting the world of action with the world of speculation; they believe that the earth is not enough, the heavens are not enough; there must be a union of the two, here and now. The best way of achieving divineness, according to them, is not to remain immersed in a single truth as in a warm tub, but always to preserve the mind of a learner, always going from brightness into larger brightness. In one of his most exquisite essays Charles Lamb speaks of a mind that is satisfied with hints, surmises, and partial glimpses. The universe of Gandhi was different; it was full of noontide brilliance. The English find this trying; they prefer a mistier atmosphere.

Like the Buddha, though in much lesser fashion, Gandhi could not save the English: they wanted, and continued to want, joy and greater joy; he offered them repentance and the heavenly kingdom. The gulf between the two, Gandhi and the English, is deep, and cannot be bridged by mealy-

mouthed pieties. Just because Gandhi did not understand the true value of food, sex, and the Englishman, they continued to obsess him. His limitations actually added to his charm. He was not a mortal who saw everything with the eyes of an immortal, but a poor puzzled soul, always trying to equate the seen with the unseen.

The Word did not become Flesh in him; it trembled for a while in the air like a fiery spark, lighted a huge conflagration in the forest of Indian humanity, and then vanished into nothingness. He, the great searcher, who had tried to make himself holier than holy, was left on a stormy shore.

X

THE CHESSBOARD OF POLITICS

GANDHI, wherever he lived, was like a general who had bivouacked for a while on a darkling plain. Everybody, from sweepers to trusted leaders of the Congress, came to consult him. He saw almost everyone, even cranks, but he had something to say to them that made them forget themselves and become parts of an army that bore no visible weapons. He knit them into a unity that nothing could break. His prescription was so simple that none could misunderstand him. He who has conquered himself, he said in substance, cannot be conquered by another. Victory is for him who believes that victory is around the corner.

Not only his followers approved of this magic formula but also the vast masses throughout the country. Only a few intellectuals, within or without the fold, demurred, but few paid any heed to their forebodings. They had little that was constructive to offer.

Gandhi never despised anyone; he knew that the most ridiculous person could, if properly handled, be made use of. Therefore he often, to the chagrin of many, spent time and energy over broken reeds. By and large, he achieved aston-

ishing results, and many times converted cowards into soldiers of God.

It must be said at once that he was not concerned, strictly speaking, with individual destinies; his main object was to reach his goal by the shortest possible route. He played chess as it had never been played before: men and women, whether Indian or British, were to him so many pieces, to be moved hither and thither, until it was time to put them back in the closet. The king, the soul of India, had to be guarded intact in freedom; it was the function of the queen (pure intelligence—in this case, he himself, Gandhi) to see to that. Pawns and knights, even mitered bishops, had to play the parts assigned to them. Gandhi had gone back, more unconsciously than consciously, to the wisdom of his ancestors, for whom chess was not a mere recreation but the ordering of life with almost scientific precision.

Possessing such an attitude, and having in view a goal that surpassed all personal ends, Gandhi could not afford the luxury of attachments. These, in any case, as the Buddha had taught ages ago, were at the root of all sorrow. He had to do his duty, which to him, as to Wordsworth, was the Stern Daughter of the Voice of God. Though he wept over the loss of the commonest of common adherents to his cause, he was not deflected even for an instant from his path. Men and women came and went; he heard them all and sent them to their various posts. He had many counselors, but it is to be doubted whether he had any intimate friends. First, he was by nature reticent, capable of bearing a great deal in silence; then, as many discovered, he had a habit of speaking with his tongue in the cheek so that one was never sure of where one stood with him; finally, even the cleverest and wisest sensed, when in his presence, that he seemed to know far more than they. Everyone reverenced and feared him.

There is hardly a notable Indian who was not made use of

by Gandhi at one time or another. Gandhi began by taking shelter under the wings of Gokhale; he admired and respected the great Maharashtrian patriot, but he found his politics ineffectual—in sum, a kind of mendicancy. Petitions and prayers, however noble, were no way of achieving independence.

Though Tilak was a mighty figure, and one that dominated the Indian scene, his undisguised militarism was dangerous to the country. Gandhi did not like his ways, but wisely did nothing to antagonize him. He paid him homage, and went his own way, working quietly, almost silently. Tilak, whom millions revered in his homeland, watched the activities of Gandhi, and smiled. To him, they were like the dance of a gnat in the sunshine.

Between these two men, each superb in his own way, there was little or nothing in common. One, a great scholar, a master of Sanskrit, and steeped in the martial traditions of a valorous race, represented the fine flower of Hindu culture; the other, oddly dressed, with a commonplace face in which his eyes glittered like black pebbles and his mouth ran from ear to ear, babbled of green fields where the village idiot would blaspheme the British and practice nonviolence and thus save his soul.

Though Rabindranath Tagore had called Gandhi "Mahatma" at the beginning, and continued to show him immense respect, as the years passed the poet found himself more and more alien to Gandhi. He himself treated life as a work of art, where beauty was its own excuse for being; Gandhi had no sympathy with such an attitude, and treated it as a frivolity. Tagore thought of life as a dome of many-colored glass; Gandhi held it to be "a preparation for death" that was but a prelude to another existence. This seemed mad to Tagore. Why be reborn if the years allotted on earth are a progress toward dissolution? Who wants to come on

earth merely to make ready to go? Though Tagore found Gandhi impossible, he knew that the little man was a wizard who could sway multitudes as no one else could. So he periodically saluted him, from a safe distance, and went on composing poems and painting pictures.

Gandhi knew that Tagore had brought renown to the country, and was a tremendous asset to it; but he also knew that the poet was oversensitive, even vain, and had to be handled with extreme tact and courtesy.

Once, when visiting a town, Gandhi found Tagore acting in a play, and was shocked. How could the Poet Laureate of India descend to such a level? He spoke to Tagore about it, but most diplomatically.

"It is the only way that I can raise funds for Santiniketan," admitted the poet. "I need the money, need it badly."

"How much do you want?"

The sum was mentioned. Gandhi laughed softly. "Don't worry," he said. "You shall have what you need."

A few days later Tagore received a check that astonished him. The words that accompanied the gift were: "India is honored to help you." Gandhi had not given a cent from his own pocket, for he possessed nothing; but he had asked one of his rich disciples to do so. With this one stroke, gracefully achieved, he made it almost impossible for the poet to oppose him.

Aurobindo, who according to some was one of the earliest to work for Indian independence, but with methods borrowed from the West, especially Ireland, kept a sharp eye on Gandhi from his retreat in Pondicherry. He could not see how freedom was to be won by pacific means; either the British had to be flung into the sea or one had to cooperate with them and show oneself as competent as they were. But he was a large man, and said nothing to make Gandhi's difficulties, which were innumerable, multiply. He loved art and

philosophy passionately, but he loved India no less, and whoever was trying to untie her bonds was, in his considered opinion, worthy of succor. Gandhi, fully aware of Aurobindo's history and of his intellectual eminence, paid the sage judicious compliments, and sought his blessings in his undertakings.

Gandhi was a master tactician who, with artless art, made all sorts and conditions of people work for his cause. Motilal Nehru, a renowned lawyer, living a life of ease and comfort, and possessing a mind of his own, at first found Gandhi quite comical; but soon fell under the spell of this extraordinary man from one of the most backward parts of India, a place where a petty ruler governed in petty grandeur. Motilal had heard the story, which caused laughter in his household, that the ruler, when Gandhi was married at the age of thirteen, had given Gandhi's father, as a contribution toward the expenses of the coming festivities, a number of cowries (then the smallest coin in the country) from his Treasury to help defray expenses. Now this man who had been reared in such primitive surroundings, and who had passed much of his time among the coolie classes in South Africa, a country of Negroes where a few white men strutted like peacocks, was trying to transform India. It seemed comical. Yet when Gandhi spoke, in his soft melting voice, humble but always dignified, Motilal found deep stirrings within him; he was not listening to one man or to one voice but to the groans and sighs of a whole race. The Indian in him, who had almost been submerged by the swiftly moving tide of Europeanism, saw himself as a sad spectacle. He was ashamed of himself, and began to revert, though not at once, to his origins.

Gandhi had also captured the imagination of Jawaharlal Nehru, a young man in the pink of health, handsome, elegant, educated like an upper-class Englishman, independent-minded, hypersensitive, forward-looking, full of energy, fond

of beauty, yet capable of enormous sacrifices. Gandhi had done this by asserting categorically that India, though a slave nation at present, was in reality the mother of civilizations, the cradle of culture, possessing a cosmic energy that could fill the world with a love that embraced all.

The youthful Nehru, who had had enough of the British in India, and who believed himself and his people to be second to none, at once agreed with Gandhi. Here was a man, he said to himself, who was making explicit what was implicit in his own consciousness. He followed him as a master. This was one of the greatest victories achieved by Gandhi. By having captured the younger Nehru, he had not only succeeded in winning over Motilal Nehru but also the cream of Indian society.

Gandhi had no illusions about Jawaharlal; he was conscious from the beginning that his young disciple was totally different from himself in upbringing and temperament. Gandhi looked to the past for sustenance; Nehru was scientific-minded, not overreligious, and more interested in tomorrow than in yesterday, yet with the love of India in his heart. That was, for Gandhi, the crux of the matter. He could trust this philosophic dandy who would carry his torch not only faithfully but with ever-brightening effect to the four corners of the world.

The Hindu, high or low, was no mystery to Gandhi; the Englishman, too, he understood in some ways; but the Muslim, of a certain type, remained an enigma to him. That Gandhi did not realize this constitutes one of the great calamities of modern times. Jinnah, whom Gandhi thought to be a mere braggart, not only upset all his plans but cornered him again and again till he obtained what he wanted. Gandhi and Jinnah were poles apart: the former was a man with a mission; the latter wanted the best for himself and his co-religionists.

There were times when Gandhi was not a member of the Congress, after he had resigned and was devoting himself to social work. Nevertheless everyone knew, even children in school, that his word was law. This annoyed Jinnah beyond measure. On whose behalf was Gandhi speaking? When, at one time, Gandhi asked the students to leave their colleges, he consulted no one. Jinnah complained that the boys were as much his as Gandhi's, yet no one had so much as asked his opinion on the matter. He came to the conclusion that if he worked with Gandhi, he and his people would always occupy a subordinate position. This his pride would not allow. All things considered, he was in no way a lesser man than Gandhi. In fact, he was better looking, better bred, better educated, better informed, better allied, and better thought of by the ruling class, the British. Why should he, then, give in to one superior to him in no wise?

There is no doubt that Gandhi, subtle as he was, failed dismally to comprehend Jinnah. As the years passed, and the two men grew older, the difference between them widened. For once, Gandhi forgot that there could be a pride greater than his own. The fact is that Gandhi failed to make Jinnah a member of the great Indian family. The separation of Hindus and Muslims, engineered by Jinnah, is the greatest tragedy that has occurred in the history of the subcontinent. And Gandhi cannot escape his share of the blame, much as he worked for the union of the two communities.

What Jinnah obtained was significant enough to make Pakistan the second most important Muslim state in the world. The curious thing is that Jinnah, though ostensibly a follower of Islam, hardly knew the Koran. A Westernized Indian, he dressed with immaculate taste, lived in a bungalow that contained the latest conveniences, drove about in a smart car, went to the best clubs, enjoyed choice wines and liquors, smoked the best cigarettes, and spoke as though he

had been born and bred in a bourgeois family in the suburbs of London. The English thought, when quietly encouraging him in his demands, that they would have him in their pocket. It was a catastrophic mistake. Jinnah, though he had many English friends and liked to be in the company of the English, loathed English bureaucrats. He found them dull, old-fashioned, and riddled with prejudice. He wanted them to pack up and go home as much as Gandhi did; but he was clever, and knew that his country was too young and inexperienced to stand alone, so he made as much use of the English as he could. The real power he kept in his own hands.

But how did the masses accept as unquestionable leader one who was not even a practicing Muslim? Here lies the real grandeur of Jinnah. He did not talk of piety and privation, repentance or the kingdom of heaven, but simply of the Muslim way of life in a purely Muslim state. This fired the imagination of his adherents, who in any case had never cared for a perpetual tightening of the belt, and they followed him. He was the only man, they saw, who could deliver the goods. Did not the British treat him as the equal of Gandhi, and did not Gandhi himself honor him with the title of "Qaid-i-Azam" (Great Leader)?

Jinnah, finding that Gandhi was too self-centered, and in his way as selfish as the ruling power, became, soon after the 1937 elections, both anti-Hindu and anti-British. A consummate lawyer, he was a man whom it was extremely difficult, if not futile, to try to outwit. He was always a step or two ahead of his opponents.

Jinnah had at one time dreamed of living in a free India where Hindus and Muslims were equal, but he found this to be impractical. The Hindu leaders, led by Gandhi, were always thinking in terms of majority and minority, thereby revealing that the Muslims would be allowed to participate

in the government of the country only in an advisory capacity. Jinnah did not want to be the cat's-paw of anyone. A Congress leader, at one time a member of the Indian Cabinet, told me that he knew Jinnah intimately, for he had worked with him for years as a lawyer. "I have the greatest admiration for him," he declared; "he was kindly, understanding, full of the reflex hues of passionate dispassion. He could be arrogant, hot-tempered, impatient, even slightly wild, but when a problem faced him he became cold as steel, and cut through everything with rapier thrusts. There were two men in him: the gentleman and the card sharp. The combination was irresistible."

Jinnah knew that he had to build up his organization and make it function smoothly and efficiently. He set about his task by astutely utilizing the errors of the Congress and the good will of the British. When Nehru declared his credo soon after the elections of 1937, he remarked, in good faith, "There are only two parties in the country, the Congress and the British."

Jinnah's retort was immediate. "No," he proclaimed, "there is a third—the Muslims."

In 1942, sick of Britain's procrastinations, Gandhi, who had the patience of Job, cried, "Quit India!"

Jinnah at once agreed, merely adding, "Divide and quit."

My father knew Jinnah well; they had begun law practice at the same time, and for a while had worked together. Because of this, Jinnah was extremely kind to me when I met him twice. What impressed me about him was his grasp of world affairs. Although he was living in Bombay at the time of our first talk, he was fully aware of what was happening in Europe. "Hitler is a man to watch," he told me. "Because he is semi-educated and of humble origin, he may in his rage succeed in destroying Western culture and civilization.

I am not enamored of the whites; most of them are savages in broadcloth; but their adventure is brave and has much to teach us."

I listened to him while he gave me a panoramic view of world events. At last I asked, "Is it true that you hate the Hindus?" A sad smile touched his gaunt face. "How can I? I have sprung from the same stock. But how would you like to live in your elder brother's house on mere sufferance? If there is any manhood in you, you would quit and live, if necessary, in a slum."

Jinnah left the Hindu-Muslim family because he felt it did not give him his due. Gandhi, the chosen head of the vast household, was trying to be fair to everyone, and therein lay his blunder.

Another remark of Jinnah's has stuck in my memory. He said: "If I remember rightly, the Stuart Period has been called one of leather, lace, and lovelocks. Gandhi is trying to usher in an age of dhotis [loincloths], chapals [sandals of extreme simplicity], and close-cropped heads, as though we were all convicts. Ugh!" He picked up a cigarette, inserted it in a long ivory holder, and lighted it, as if to say that he and his adherents sought things other than those Gandhi promised. The antagonism between the Hindu and the Muslim leaders was fundamental, and admitted of no compromise. Only Nehru could have resolved the differences, but he was powerless, having submitted his will to the authority of his chosen master.

Some accepted Gandhi and Gandhism only partially, while others gave him and his ideas unquestioning acceptance. Mrs. Naidu, it will be remembered, had met Gandhi in London and immediately succumbed to his charm. She was an extraordinary woman: exquisite poet, orator, a lover of good living, playful, even mischievous in her humor, practical yet starry-eyed, she was cowed by no one. She did not

even spare Gandhi, making jokes at his expense whenever chance presented. Above all, she was heroic. She loved India, and was prepared to lay down her life for it. Whenever Gandhi gave the call for resistance against the British, she was one of the first to offer her services. She suffered many indignities, and was often thrust into unsanitary jails, where the very air was foul and where the food was such as to turn one's stomach. Nevertheless she bore every privation with a quip, and all those who had the privilege of being her fellow prisoners worshiped her; she was a breath of fresh air in a foul atmosphere. Gandhi respected her immensely, and was always pleased when she was by his side. She made him forget his intolerable burden by her wit and irrepressible optimism.

What was it that made this remarkable woman give up everything to follow a confirmed rebel? The cause of the country, yes; but there was something deeper behind it than has been generally suspected. Gandhi gave her, as he gave so many others of her sex, tenderness. Naturally, unhappy women, women with maddening problems, gathered about him like bees round a flower.

Mrs. Naidu stood by the side of Gandhi in every moment of storm and stress. Nothing seemed to frighten her. What Gandhi said was true, and she followed him unquestioningly. That she was capable of arguing and putting forth her point of view is true; but when a decision had been given she obeyed it smilingly.

When India had become free, and when posts were being distributed by the new government, Mrs. Naidu was made Governor of Uttar Pradesh, one of the largest and most populous states in India. Here she lived in a palatial house, at Lucknow or at Naini Tal, relishing her favorite dishes, taking plenty of rest, appearing in gala dress at ceremonial functions, making wonderful speeches from time to time,

entertaining her friends, and, in short, thoroughly enjoying herself. Her girth, which in later years had increased noticeably, now assumed unmanageable proportions. Luxurious living also converted her double chin into a triple one. She tried to write poetry but could not; the Muse that had visited her in her youth now refused to spend even a night in her verse. Mrs. Naidu, the Nightingale of India, and later the chief heroine of the resistance movement, was fast becoming a *bourgeoise repue,* as the French would say.

This, unfortunately, is the fate of many who, having fasted and prayed during the time of Gandhi, have now ascended to the seats of power.

Many pretty and accomplished women sacrificed much to serve Gandhi; among these, a prominent place must be given to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Rehana Tyabji, Sushila Nayer, and, of course, the wonderful wife of Jayprakash Narayan, the Socialist leader. But for these helpers Gandhi's tasks would have proved insupportable; each, in her characteristic way, took on a part of his ever-increasing load.

A puzzling personality, Miss Madeleine Slade, well born, well bred, well formed physically, gave up the advantages of English social life to serve Gandhi until his sad end. One cannot call this, strictly speaking, an idyll, for love in the Western sense of the word did not enter into the relationship; it was rather an attraction of the moth for the flame. Introduced by Romain Rolland to the work of Gandhi, this English girl, still young and inexperienced, was driven by a force stronger than herself to serve a man of whom she had heard at home the most fantastic tales. This only increased her desire to aid one who was trying to help all humanity. She was tired of conventional morality, graces, valuations, and beliefs. The unknown and the unexplained fascinated her.

It must be said that the English love to adopt a cause, the remoter and more dangerous, the better. Colonel Law-

rence had taken up the side of the Arabs, and for their sake destroyed his own career. Other Englishmen have fought other outlandish battles, and gone down without a murmur. The point is that the English like to defend what they consider defenseless.

Miss Slade may have been moved by this racial impulse. At any rate, she prepared herself for life in India before she joined Gandhi in his ashram near Ahmedabad. She was received with open arms, but given a hard apprenticeship. She performed her duties, however unpleasant, unflinchingly: she suffered imprisonment several times, was often laid low by tropical fevers, suffered in the heat of the Indian summer, and played the part of sweeper, scavenger, nursemaid. Nevertheless, her spirit remained resilient. Gandhi showed special interest in her, and by wise counsel made her in some ways radically different from her compatriots.

"I had explained to *Bapu*," says Miss Slade, "how several little mice had started coming into the hut from the forest, especially at night. They found their way into my bed, sometimes nibbling my feet, sometimes running up and down my side and sometimes getting mixed up in my hair. My chief anxiety was not to squash them. . . ." She had learned her lessons well, but was perhaps overserious. Had not Gandhi himself, a constitutional humorist, when in jail guided the bugs in his bed, with the aid of a folded newspaper, into the office of the English superintendent?

Miss Slade had been more or less Brahmanized, but she had, despite the best efforts of Gandhi, not been quite dehumanized. Her struggles toward the wondrous goal, honored and honorable nothingness, ended in periodic revolts that grieved her guru, scandalized the ashramites, and left her pale and shuddering, lonelier than before. The love that Gandhi had bestowed upon her was, as he himself said often, at once paternal and maternal. She herself, being young and

ever idealistic, appreciated this immensely, but her personal drama remains agonizing.

Mrs. Annie Besant had been seeking spiritual light for years, and, after many journeyings, found it on the higher grounds of Hinduism. She forsook England, and pitched her tent in India where she worked for the good of the people with a passionate selflessness that made her name one to conjure with in the country of her adoption. She was well inclined toward Gandhi from the beginning, and gave him her blessings in his efforts; but when she found out what he was really striving for she recoiled from him. It was all very well to agitate for reforms and to get some measure of self-rule, but to sabotage British power was something wicked, if not actually sinful. She drew away from Gandhi, bitterly criticized him again and again, saying that he was leading the country downhill. Her fears were utterly groundless, but she was, for all her liberality of views, bound to the British. However, there were other reasons for her disapproval: she distrusted Gandhi's pious guise and suspected his humility, which seemed to her too good to be true. It seemed to her that his soft words smelled of gunpowder. To her he was a wily politician who was trying to gain his ends by spiritual jugglery. He now seemed to her to be a fanatic who had come to rob life of all color.

Gandhi was a just man; he respected Mrs. Besant as one who had done extraordinarily good work, but he had no sympathy whatever for her obscure ideas. He quietly damned her with faint praise.

C. F. Andrews had become intimately connected with Gandhi from the days of the South African struggle, and remained a loyal friend to the end. Of this Englishman's nobility it is difficult to speak in measured terms. He devoted his life to the cause of the poor and the meek; he lived, as he died, a saint. India owes him a great debt of gratitude, for

he gave help to those that needed it, and asked for nothing in return. But Andrews, though he lived on terms of deep understanding with both Gandhi and Tagore, remained uninfluenced by the deeper side of Indianism. He had a very limited mind. Once, at a lecture in a college at Oxford, I heard him say that Indians were still idol worshipers. I had seen him a little before his talk standing in rapture before an image of Christ. I reminded him of this, and asked what the difference was.

"Yes, you are right," he said. "The action, in either case, is the same—acknowledging a power superior to one's self."

Gandhi knew the limitations of Andrews, but they mattered little or nothing to him, for the man was doing much good.

The Polaks, husband and wife, have told us all that they could about Gandhi, and we are grateful to them for their informative writings. Both of them played a fine part in the Indian awakening in South Africa, and bore, smilingly, with many of Gandhi's fads and fancies. But that was a period of pure adventure, when they were young and ready to tilt against windmills. But success and environment produced a deep change in them: they dissociated themselves from Gandhi, and went their own way.

Edward Thompson helped Gandhi as best he could, but had not for him any attachment or admiration. He reserved these feelings for Nehru. Gandhi appeared to him to be a good man who was trying to turn the tide back. "The past," Thompson told me, "is valuable only in so far as it leads to the divine present. Gandhi seems to me a babbler of fatuities; he ever speaks of Ram Raj, quite unaware that there never has been a Golden Age. All epochs are more or less villainous. Take, for instance, the period of Pericles. Flaubert, who had made a profound study of it, said that it was a rotten time, full of cruelty and oppression, but lucky

in having produced some works of matchless art. The years of Rama must have been, on the whole, equally scoundrelly. To believe poets, epic or lyrical, is to believe fables deliberately."

Gandhi took in his stride praise and criticism of himself; both were, according to him, futile, matters of temperament. His task was not to linger over certain likes and dislikes, but to harness them to drive his chariot. Edward Thompson, he knew, was in tune with Nehru. And Gandhi realized that this intrepid Englishman could be made to tell the truth about India to the civilized world. He himself consulted Thompson as often as necessary, especially on points of style and grammar. Once, in an important document, which was to be put before the British Government, the words "might not" had been used by the Congress experts; Gandhi changed them into "must not" and then crossed these out, after some reflection, and substituted "may not." Thompson watched this finicking with amusement, and asked Gandhi why he was so particular about tiny matters. "Because," he was informed, "I want to leave open no loophole; if there is one, your good countrymen will creep through it and widen it into a gulf." Then, suspending all other business, he explained to his hearers the precise meaning and importance of the expression he had finally adopted.

"Gandhi was like that," Thompson said to me. "Nothing was too small for his scrutiny. He had the woman's eye for detail. The very god he worships is concrete, earthy, present everywhere in the world. This is man, especially the failure. He despised success, imagining that it was a trap set up by Satan to capture an aspiring soul. All this seems to me fiddle-faddle, but there it is. Gandhi has everything except wings."

Agatha Harrisson had for Gandhi an admiration that nothing could diminish; in her quiet, subtle way she did what-

ever she could to advance the Indian cause. She was not favorably looked upon by the authorities for this devotion, and I know she suffered for it, but that did not deflect her from what she considered to be her duty. It was her task during the war, when news was hard to come by, to present the Congress cause, through this or that society, to the British public. Every week she read innumerable papers and magazines, marked certain passages with a red pencil, and distributed her store of cuttings to those who had to be made aware of the realities. A humble job, to be sure, but how much labor it involved!

Verrier Elwin, that delightful anthropologist who combines a light touch with the industry of an ant, rendered Gandhi and the Indian struggle signal service. He still continues to be of help to the new government, trying to see, as ever, the cosmic through the comic.

Lord Pethick-Lawrence had become acquainted with Gandhi at the beginning of the 1914–1918 war, and continued to be in touch with him for a long, long time. He differed from the great Hindu on many matters, but he entertained for him warmth of feeling and intellectual appreciation. He has written about him superbly, but with clear-cut reservations. For Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Gandhi was the conscience of man, revolting against the powers and principalities that have us in their grasp.

Gandhi's ties with Lord Pethick-Lawrence were of real use to India, for in the negotiations with Britain, especially with the Labour leaders, he could count on the support of at least one sympathetic listener.

Sir Stafford Cripps had an instinctive appreciation of Gandhi, for both were vegetarians, both were moral, both were lawyers of integrity, both were politicians by necessity, and both looked forward to a time when the lion and the

lamb could at least bow to each other. Yet, strange to say, they were, as are the English and the Americans, divided from each other because they spoke the same language.

"Gandhi," Sir Stafford told me, "is an extremely complex personality, far more complex than a European politician or statesman. That he is a thoroughly good man and thoroughly selfless I have not the least doubt; at the same time, I am pretty certain that he is not averse from getting the better of an opponent. Indeed, he enjoys putting the other fellow in the wrong. He always seems to think that he is always right. This makes me imagine that he may always be wrong. The quarrel between India and England is not between good and evil, but between two rights, as in the symphonies of Beethoven. He doesn't seem to see that; he simplifies too much. It is wonderful to shed all possessions, but sometimes it is a duty to cling to them for the sake of others. Gandhi gave me a shock now and then. During a discussion, when he seemed to be losing ground, he would fake a saintly smile and say that his prayer time had come. Off he would go, call upon his Deity, and then carefully consult the best brains of India. Thus fortified, divinely and humanly, he would return and continue his eternal argling-bargling. He thought that we were taken in. Unfortunately for him, we English are not altogether naïve; if there was going to be a loading of the dice, we could play the game too. . . ."

Sir Stafford was inclined to call Gandhi a combination of St. Francis of Assisi and Grey Eminence, or, as he put it, "a saint who was too political and a politician who was too saintly."

Lord Halifax has written about Gandhi in his *Fullness of Days,* but he was good enough to tell me that the Indian leader impressed him by his unfailing courtesy and charm. "He was a most reasonable man, ever ready to negotiate even when no negotiation was possible. One of the difficulties

in arguing with him was that, like most Indians, he gave certain words a meaning that was far from our minds. The English language, as you know, is multiple-edged, now conveying this sense, now that; all depends upon the context. It is part of our practice, in documents, legal and political, so to use our mother tongue that our hands are not tied. Every action is right at a particular moment, not at all times and in all places. Gandhi appeared to think that when we had said a thing we were bound by it forever. In plain words, he tended to confuse the gospel of this or that race with the political *finasseries* of temporal power. We English know but too well the sentence: 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' To give to both the same jam would be to please neither; yet Gandhi often seemed to demand this."

Romain Rolland had been deeply moved by Gandhi's lone fight against British imperialism, and had spent much time in writing a book about him. It is a work that no inquirer can afford to neglect, for it is full of that large humanity that Shakespeare possessed; not to be race-bound is indeed an achievement in these modern times of open or secret jingoism; yet the great Frenchman is finally disappointing because his note is too shrill and too lyrical. When he finally met Gandhi in 1931, he formed of him a slightly clearer picture than he had drawn earlier. Writing to an American friend, he said, without meaning to broadcast his words to the world: "How I should have liked to have you here during the visit of the Indians! They stayed five days—from the 5th to 11th December—at the Villa Vionette. The little man, bespectacled and toothless, was wrapped in his white burnoose, but his legs, thin as a heron's stilts, were bare. His shaven head with his few coarse hairs was uncovered and wet with rain. He came to me with a dry laugh, his mouth open like a good dog panting, and flinging an arm round me

leaned his cheek against my shoulder. I felt his grizzled head against my cheek. It was, I amuse myself thinking, the kiss of St. Dominic and St. Francis. . . . This little man, so frail in appearance, is tireless, and fatigue is a word which does not exist in his vocabulary. He could calmly answer for hours the heckling of a crowd, as he did at Lausanne and Geneva, without a muscle of his face twitching. Seated on a table, motionless, his voice always clear and calm, he replied to his adversaries open or masked—and they were not lacking at Geneva—giving them rude truths which left them silenced and suffocated. . . . His mind proceeds through successive experiments into action and he follows a straight line, but he never stops, and one risks error in attempting to judge him by what he said ten years ago, because his thought is in constant evolution. I will give you a little example of it that is characteristic."

Here Romain Rolland pauses to distinguish between Gandhi's earlier belief "God is truth" and the later "Truth is God," adding: "You will understand from this single trait the boldness and independence of this religious spirit from the Orient. I noted in him traits similar to Vivekananda . . . and yet not a single political ruse catches him unprepared. And his own politics are to say everything that he thinks to everybody, not concealing a thing. . . . We also exchanged our ideas on art, from which he does not separate his conception of truth, nor from his conception that of joy, which he thinks truth should bring. But it follows of itself that for this heroic nature joy does not come without effort, nor even life itself without hardship. 'The seeker after truth hath a heart tender as a lotus, and hard as granite.' . . . My sister, having survived, has gone to take ten days' rest at a cure in Zurich. She returns shortly. For my part, I have entirely lost the gift of sleep. If you find it, send it to me by registered mail!"

This is a precious pen portrait, revealing the artist even

more than the sitter. The great sentimentalist had turned into the great cynic: the god that he had set up proved to have feet of clay. Gandhi was shown Rolland's words when they appeared in print, but he was not at all offended. He could take criticism with a smile. He had faith in himself, and, he was sure, he had disciples of caliber who would do his bidding unquestioningly; but these were all, as was but natural, his compatriots.

Mahadev Desai had sacrificed almost everything to be of service to him. His devotion was motiveless; he sat at the feet of the master day after day, acting as perfect secretary, confidant and nurse, without a thought for himself. He seemed to have been made for his job. When he passed away, after a heart attack in the Aga Khan's palace, all India mourned him. Gandhi, however, showed no outward grief over the departure forever of the comrade of a thousand fights: God had sent him and God had called him back.

A greater blow fell on Gandhi when his wife, after a brief illness in her palace prison, was claimed by death. Gandhi was stunned; his lifelong companion, who had stood by him in every adversity, always giving him courage, was now no more; she had left him lonelier than ever. But he suppressed his sorrow, shattering though it was, and busied himself with the affairs of the country. He had gone, by now, beyond personal ache and jubilation. The game he was born to play had not yet finished. More and more souls had to be trained.

Three men, exceptional in every way, were profoundly impressed by Gandhi, and are even now carrying out his ideas to the best of their abilities: Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of India at present; Vinoba Bhave, founder and torchbearer of the Bhoodan Movement; and Jayaprakash Narayan, the Galahad of Indian Socialism.

Several Indian millionaires, including Mr. G. D. Birla,

Jamnalal Bajaj, and Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai, put their persons and their purses at the disposal of Gandhi on not a few occasions. That these hardheaded businessmen were not free from mundane calculations cannot be believed; but there is no doubt that they were also moved by the Spirit.

Sardar Patel and Mr. Rajagopalachari gave their allegiance to Gandhi, but always remained free and fearless agents. They were both men of thought who found their peace in action. There are men who look before and after, and pine for what is not; Sardar Patel was not like that: when he decided upon a path he followed it relentlessly. He differed from Gandhi in many ways, but he had come to the conclusion that his own views were of minor importance compared to the liberty of India. Right or wrong, he expressed his opinion and then bowed to the verdict of his leader. This attitude changed when India became independent; then Sardar Patel, being appointed Home Minister, thought it his duty not to listen to anyone but to work for the glory and grandeur of his country. He did many things contrary to the wishes of both Gandhi and Nehru, but he was never sorry for the steps he felt forced to take. Had it not been for his clairvoyance and iron firmness, India would still be a patchwork quilt. Sardar Patel began by roping in those princes who were notorious for their extravagance and misrule. Having done so, he brought their colleagues into the Indian Union by cajolery and coercion. New India, within a very short time, became a well-knit nation, which she might not have been if Sardar Patel had not acted at the right time with the right force. As he himself remarked to me in 1950, when he had come to Bombay for treatment of a disease that ultimately proved fatal: "I had to do it at once, or our country would have gone, as the English had half-expected and half-hoped, to the dogs. Now the gilded lackeys of imperialism are properly muzzled and soon they and their children will cease

to consider the white man as their father and mother." Patel paused for a while, then vigorously scratched the back of his head. Almost in a whisper, he said: "There is a lot to do in our country but I'm afraid I shall not be here to play my part. I already hear the rustle of the wings of the Angel of Death. . . ."

Patel was a truly great man whose loss is still felt in India. Gandhi knew how to choose his lieutenants; therein lay part of his greatness. For the first places in the Indian Government, Gandhi could have selected those who obeyed him implicitly, but he deliberately honored the two men, Nehru and Patel, who differed from him in many respects. He did so because he trusted them and expected them to work for the betterment of the country.

There were some whom Gandhi, for all his patience, could not influence; these were the persons who believed that harsh measures were sometimes necessary. One such was Subhas Bose. He was an extraordinary man, keen-witted, sharp-eyed, ill-tempered, mercurial, highly ambitious, full of self-importance, and yet a patriot among patriots and possessed of a personality whose spell was almost irresistible. He played Gandhi's game as long as it suited him, and then struck out a path of his own. That was all very well as long as he remained a lone voice, but when he tried to lead Congress in his direction Gandhi put his foot down mercilessly. Gandhi had to remove Bose from his post as legally chosen President of the Congress. The deed in itself was not righteous, yet it had to be performed. Of course, Gandhi had read the Gita so often and so well that he knew every verse of it practically by heart. Had not Krishna advised Arjuna to engage in war because it was his duty to do so? And, in any event, the men he was going to destroy were already dead in the mind of God; all he had to do was to be an instrument of the Divine. Gandhi did not see the sophistry of this, but refined on it.

Whenever the members of the Working Committee came to see Gandhi, he assumed a humble and injured air, saying that no one cared to listen to him now. Such was the way of the world. Bose, a youngster he had practically fathered, was all in all. There was no room in India now for old and tried servants. It is not said whether Gandhi actually wept, but his tone was decidedly lachrymose. He knew what would work; he was adopting the technique that has never failed woman in any age. He was more feminine than he suspected.

The result of this maneuver was that Bose found himself without a single committee member; all shied away from him as though he were a leper. As a result he was obliged to resign. Gandhi had done nothing, of course; he had not said a word that might cause the least chagrin. In truth, he continued to speak to Bose in endearing terms. Such was Gandhi's method. He destroyed an opponent by seeming to placate him. But very subtly he created around the man an atmosphere he could not breathe.

Gandhi generally won his point, but it is questionable whether he ever made friends with the many people he came across and worked with. It is true that his eye was on the goal, not on this or that individual; but great as he was, greater was his loneliness.

The only really contented woman who lived in his ashram for a while and then turned away once said to me, speaking of the Mahatma: "He was like the sun; if you were near him, he burned you; if you were far from him, he warmed you."

XI

END OF AN AGE

GANDHI antagonized many by his very presence, for he was a standing reproach to them. They hated him, and waited for an opportunity to pounce upon him. That he himself suspected this is beyond question. A little before his assassination he had summoned his secretary to his side and gone through the most pressing or vital correspondence. He was working feverishly, as though something within him was telling him that his days on earth would soon be over.

When independence came, and when all India was rejoicing, he was not in the imperial city, but in distant Bengal, in a small village, living humbly, trying to protect Muslims from Hindu fury. Madness descended upon the ancient land of Ind. Its two great communities, not satisfied with cutting the country in two, began to seek vengeance on each other.

Nehru was right when he said that he was "astounded" over what had so "unexpectedly" happened. Some perverse frenzy, he confessed, had seized the Indians, "the most peaceful nation in the world"—a people "who would not kill a fly or a mosquito or even a snake."

Gandhi was stricken with sorrow. This was not true freedom, but pure sectarianism, a negation of all progress. Had

he toiled for so many years merely to bring about collective madness? No, it was a temporary aberration, and it must soon pass away. It was for him to quench the mounting fires of resentment. He went from place to place, often trudging on foot in the sweltering heat, trying to remove fears, and soothing tempers everywhere. The courage and tenacity of this frail man, who had passed the age of seventy, were almost superhuman. He succeeded in his efforts in the parts he visited. There the Muslims were not only left in peace by the Hindus but were treated as fellow citizens.

While Gandhi was in Bengal, tranquilizing the people, violence erupted in the capital. He was requested to come back to Delhi, where, it was felt, his voice was bound to produce its wonted effect. Like a soldier at the summons of duty, he returned, giving no thought to personal inclinations. His usual hut in the Sweepers' Colony was not available for him; refugees had occupied it, just as they had occupied any place that had a roof over it. He was begged by the Indian Government to live at Birla House, where some comfort and protection might be afforded him. It was winter then, and the weather was more than usually bitter. Rains, too, had started, turning low-lying areas into lakes of mud. There was also a fear of epidemics breaking out, for the city was packed to overflowing. The murmurs and mutters of the dispossessed and the bereaved rose to a menacing howl. The time was out of joint, and only one man could put it right. His strength lay in his disdain for all strength.

Gandhi did not like the offer of quarters in a sumptuous mansion, but he accepted it with good grace. What did it matter to him where he lived? Everything was God's: the palace could be as holy as the temple; it all depended on the person who dwelt there. Anyhow, he had more important matters to consider. The fratricidal conflict between Hindus and Muslims was breaking out in other parts of India, and

it must cease. He had been thinking of a fast. Before resorting to it, he had written about it to Nehru and other colleagues of his. He was asked not to indulge in it, as he was now fairly advanced in life and would be taking unnecessary risks; but he was adamant. His "voice" seemed to be driving him to it.

Gandhi used soul force not only to bring the various communities to their senses but also some members of the Indian Cabinet who, it appears, were ruling the country according to their lights. The Prime Minister had said, for instance, that if the masses did not give up terroristic activities, he would use bombs against them. Gandhi thought this not only wrong but against the trend of all his teachings. His very heir apparent, on whom he had bestowed the tenderest of his affections, was turning away from him, and adopting Western ways.

The fast began on January 13, 1948. Everyone, East or West, was interested in it. Could he do it—this old man of seventy-eight? It was hardly justified, this grandiose gesture. Many thought it was to impress the world. Those who reasoned thus did not know what they were saying: Gandhi did have an eye on the gallery in whatever he did, but his motive was always dictated by his daemon.

Although he took no food whatsoever, Gandhi did not interrupt his work; the old routine, packed with duties and obligations, went on. Daily he addressed the crowd that assembled at his prayer meeting. At these times he spoke his mind freely, not sparing anyone; indeed, his criticisms of the authorities were by no means mild. Sometimes, because of growing weakness, he could hardly speak, and then a friend or disciple read out what he had scribbled down.

While he was fasting, ministers of the Central Cabinet began to confer among themselves. Gandhi was not sparing them by any means; in fact, he was not only making their

position awkward but bringing them into disrepute. What to do? What he suggested seemed not quite practical or practicable. Still, not to alienate the grand old man, they swallowed their convictions and tried to please him in a large way. They gave to Pakistan a substantial sum of money they had been withholding owing to the Kashmir dispute. They knew that this money would be spent to buy arms, which would be used against India, yet they did it. Gandhi's good will was worth much sacrifice. Sixty crores of rupees (approximately $120,000,000) was the amount involved.

Gandhi was pleased, and said that this generosity had put the Pakistan Government on its honor and ought now to lead to a settlement of disputes and differences between the two sister countries. Here was one more illusion. He went on with his fast, which he broke only on January 18th, when he was informed that a Peace Committee representative of all communities in Delhi had solemnly agreed to protect the life, property, and faith of the Muslim minority. A sigh of relief went up from India. The gods had spared the old magician. But the reprieve was short. The Moving Finger was beginning to write.

On January 20th, only two days later, a bomb was thrown into the Birla House compound at prayer time. No one was hurt. Gandhi was so absorbed in the theme he was developing that he did not hear the noise of the explosion. When informed about it, he said that the youth who had acted thus was not necessarily a criminal; he had been misguided and he must be converted to right thinking and right doing. No punishment should be meted out to him.

On January 26th, "Independence Day," all India rejoiced. Gandhi, thin and pale, with eyes unnaturally large, asked in a quivering voice what in fact they were celebrating. "Now that we have handled freedom," he said, "we seem to be disillusioned. At least, I am, even if you are not." He was

becoming more and more dissatisfied with things. He deprecated strikes; he deprecated the control of essential commodities; he deprecated the prevalence of corruption in high and low places. What he said was true, but the authorities were facing a mountain of difficulties that had to be surmounted cautiously, one by one. It was not a question of doing this or that, but of timing. They had to make haste slowly.

Gandhi had begun to feel that he was a prisoner in Birla House. Before Freedom, when anything had to be done, he was consulted; now everything went on as though he did not exist. A sense of his own impotence began to gnaw at him. Was he already becoming a back number?

Although he was not even "a four-anna member * of the Congress," as he himself used to say, his influence on the public was still greater than that of any other Indian. A word from him could upset the political applecart. Should he force the issue and have the country run by a government subservient to his wishes, or should he keep quiet out of loyalty to essentially sound comrades? He brooded over this dilemma.

A distinguished Indian, who was then living in Birla House and who had some share in the shaping of the events of those days, has told me that Gandhi, after much spiritual travail, had asked for the retirement of some important ministers. These men, however powerful, had no alternative to obeying; they came tardily, on the last prayer day, with their resignations literally in their pockets. But before they could hand them in, Fate intervened.

On January 30th, as the sun began to set behind the whitewashed mansion of Birla, a cool breeze sprang up like a blessing. The old man left his cot to walk out to his dais

* Four annas, or five cents, was the minimum subscription required for joining the political organization known as the Congress Party.

on the lawn. Still weak, he was leaning on the shoulders of his two grandnieces. He moved slowly, step by step.

The crowd rose to its feet to pay him homage. Twilight was giving place to dusk. The sky was calm, serene. Suddenly, from among the chattering throng, stepped a Brahman youth from Poona, bent down as though bowing in reverence. Rising quickly, he pushed aside the girls who were supporting Gandhi, and fired at point-blank range. The report of the pistol was heard by some, but no one paid any particular attention to it. The first bullet hit Gandhi in the stomach. Instinctively he cried out, "Ram, Ram!" Two more shots cracked out. Gandhi stumbled, his spectacles dangling on one ear and his sandals coming loose. He was severely wounded; blood gushed from his abdomen and his breast and stained his spotless white loincloth. He folded his hands in a gesture of prayer, lifted them toward his audience, and then fell down, doubled up with pain. He was carried indoors, but all efforts to save his life proved vain. Thirty minutes after the dastardly attack, the tragic announcement was made in three words: "Bapu is dead."

Gandhi now slept his final sleep, his head cradled lovingly in the lap of Brij Kishen, his faithful secretary. Around his mattress sat women disciples, swaying from side to side in unison with the verses from the Gita that they were chanting. Friends and relatives pressed round the body, too stunned even to weep, while, outside, the crowd, which had now swelled, beat against the glass doors of Birla House, striving for a last look at the slain master. The terrifying silence within the room of death was broken only by prayers and the incongruous tinkle of windowpanes crashing to the floor.

The well-known American photographer and writer Margaret Bourke-White appears to have interviewed Gandhi on the very day of his assassination. She says that Gandhi, while

seated on a mattress, with his legs like toothpicks folded under him and his watch resembling an onion placed in front of him, talked of love and the atom bomb while moving the spinning wheel with rhythmic strokes.

"Gandhiji," she began, "you have always stated that you would live to be 125 years old. What gives you that hope?"

The answer was short and startling: "I have lost that hope."

"Why?"

"Because of the terrible happenings in the world. I do not wish to live in darkness and in madness. I cannot continue. . . ." He paused and waited, thoughtfully picking up some strands of cotton and running them on the spinning wheel. "But if my services are needed," he went on at last, "or rather, I should say, if I am commanded, then I shall live to be 125."

"Last year you visited the scenes of Hindu and Muslim rioting in Bengal and you said then that 'All is dark.' Tell me, have you found the light?"

"I have not found it yet," he said sadly. "I'm struggling for it. If I could find the light my hope would revive."

Americans, he was told, were also filled with forebodings, particularly about the atom bomb. "How would you use nonviolence against that weapon?"

"Ah, ah," he answered. "How shall I answer that?" He went on spinning yarn for a moment, and then said, "By prayerful action."

"You would pray while the planes were overhead?"

Gandhi shook his head. "I said prayerful action. I would come out in the open and let the pilot see that I had not the face of evil against him." Gandhi paused. "The pilot would not see my face at such a height," he said, "but that longing in our hearts that he won't come to harm would reach up to him and his eyes would be opened. Those who

were done to death in Hiroshima by the bombs, if they had died with that prayerful action, died openly with prayers in their hearts, without uttering a groan, the war would not have ended as disgracefully as it has. It is a question now whether the victors are really the victors or the victims. The world is not at peace. . . . It is still more dreadful. . . ."

Gandhi was murdered by one of his own countrymen, an adherent of his own faith. Godse, the heartless assassin, was a member of the Hindu Mahasabha, an organization of perfervid patriots, and he thought that while his own compatriots (men, women, and children) were being systematically persecuted in Pakistan the Muslims in India were being pampered. The great traitor was Gandhi. He must be snuffed out as quickly as possible. The Muslims must be given back, with compound interest, what they had given to the Hindus.

It is odd to reflect that a little idealist destroyed the greatest idealist of our time. Gandhi was gone, never to come back again. The news of his passing spread quickly. Grief struck all India, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. There was not a home, Hindu or Muslim, where tears did not flow. The maker of the nation, the man of peace, the seeker after truth, one whose faith had room for the loving care of God's least creatures, had been snatched away brutally. Many questioned the ways of Providence; others bowed to the will of the Deity.

Thousands of men and women entered the grounds of Birla House, sobbed and beat their breasts and cried, "Bapu, why have you left us?" The Muslims in Delhi mourned in silence, for a great fear had come upon them. Now that their protector was no more, what was going to happen to them? They conferred among themselves, took precautions, and barricaded themselves behind closed doors.

If they were going to be attacked, they would fall fighting.

Soon the Prime Minister put them at their ease, for he said, over the radio: "Though Gandhiji's earthly sojourn is ended, his spirit will serve as a beacon light to guide us. He led us triumphantly in the battle for freedom. In gratitude for what he has done for us, we owe him a duty. Our duty is to complete the work started by him and to establish the India of his ideal. In India we must give equal rights to all persons, irrespective of their religion, and we have also to extend to the rest of the world that lesson of equality of all men."

No one questioned these beautiful words beautifully expressed. The dead leader's will and testament were, at least for the time being, sacrosanct.

Around the dead man, in a bare room of the palatial building, prayers went on unceasingly. The odor of incense mingled with the smell of clarified butter; everywhere there were flowers. According to Hindu custom, the eyes of the departed one had been closed and his arms crossed over his breast. His face bore no sign of pain. (On the contrary, it wore a blissful smile, as though telling us of the wonder of a new awakening.)

The following day, at an early hour, Gandhi's body, smeared with aromatic paste and clad in white homespun cloth, was carried by those who were closest to him to an army vehicle covered with wreaths. Then, in a procession stretching for many miles, the cortège of the great martyr wound its way slowly through a rain of petals toward the burning ground by the sacred banks of the river Jumna.

At Raj Ghat, where huge crowds had gathered, Gandhi's remains were lowered reverently and placed on a pyre of pure sandalwood. Military planes, dipping in salute, showered blossoms over it. From among the distinguished mourn-

ers, representing various countries and various shades of Indian opinion, Nehru detached himself, walked toward the bier, and, falling on his knees, kissed Gandhi's feet. This was his silent tribute to his teacher of teachers—the man who, despite differences of belief and outlook, had signed him with the seal of his undying trust. The loyalty that had bound the two fighters together was above and beyond the petty discords of daily diplomacy; it was a harmony based on ultimate ends. Each, in his own way, had looked for the total freedom that allows man everywhere to attain his full stature in peace.

A torch was now applied to the pyre. Flames shot up from all sides. Devadas, stricken but dry-eyed, fed them with more scented fuel. The odor of incense, camphor, coconut, and burning blooms rose in the still, hot air, clung to the mourners, and well-nigh stifled them. Now nothing could be seen. Where lay what was once Gandhi there was now only fire.

Homage was paid to the memory of this unforgettable Indian by the spokesmen of the civilized world. With his going, it was felt, a light had suddenly been quenched. His radiance had been fitful, but whenever it had displayed itself in its purity it had guided many a weary seeker after truth in the jungle of human affairs.

Gandhi's ashes were scattered, as those of Kasturbai had been some time before, there where the Ganges, the Jumna, and the Saraswati—three of the most sacred rivers of India —joined. Hundreds of thousands attended this ceremony of immersion. Some stood silent; some raised their arms in a prayerful attitude; and some chanted hymns that were first intoned countless centuries ago. The boat bearing the precious urn glided swiftly outward and stopped where the watery expanse was at its widest. All eyes were turned to that spot. Now the ashes were strewn, the last prayers were said, and all was over.

A new era began. Gandhi had freed his country, and India was on the march. The changeless land would never be the same again.

Gandhi was a unity in a multiplicity. In no single activity of his was he better endowed by Nature than his predecessors or contemporaries, but his qualities and defects in combination produced results whose ends are yet unseen. He represented not only the crest of Indianism but its submerged depths. He was an exhalation of the hidden yet ever-present spirit of India. The peasants and the workers, looking at him and listening to him, instinctively accepted him and his ideas. The well born found, on hearing his words, voices they had long forgotten, which had lain imprisoned in the twilight chambers of their consciousness. He made the difficult simple, the simple convincing, and thereby stirred the hearts and minds of his countrymen.

Great as was Gandhi's influence on the remaking of India, time may still show that, like the Buddha, his impress may yet be even greater in other countries, other continents. Africans have already adopted his theory of passive resistance. Americans, too, are beginning to absorb his philosophy of moral suasion. Perhaps it is not too much to hope that Russia also will come under his magic spell.

But how far had gawky, mousy Mohan traveled! As Mr. Gandhi, he called unto himself the immemorial past of his people. Casting aside all earthly glory, he achieved true Mahatmahood. Having become the uncrowned King of India, he sought his peace in the happiness of others.

Gandhi could only have been a Hindu.